

SMITH'S

OCT., 1917

MAGAZINE

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No. 1

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A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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We Wonder If You Will Agree With Us

that the next number of SMITH'S is the
best we have ever sent to press?

Every now and then we aim to treat our readers to a special all-star number, which differs from the average all-star magazine in that the qualification refers to the STORIES themselves rather than to the brilliant REPUTATIONS of their authors. The writers represented in this coming November number are all favorites, too, but we think they have surpassed themselves in the nine short stories we have chosen from among the best of the thousands of manuscripts we have read in the last months.

Brief mention may indicate the treat that is in store for you. They are: "The Road of Dreams," by Marion Short; "The Tango Lizard," by Caroline Lockhart; "Ways of Women," by Lucy Stone Keller; "The Unmaking of Pacifist Taber," by Holman F. Day; "Adele, Ltd.," by Winona Godfrey; "Medora and the Age of Reason," by Virginia Middleton; "Columbia" by Ruth Herrick Myers; "'Showing' Trudie Renfrew," by Winifred Arnold, and "The Proposal," by John Benedict.

Best of all our good news, however, is the announcement of a splendid new serial, by Anne O'Hagan, to begin in this November issue. It is called "The Footpath Way," and is the absorbing story of a modern young college woman in business, her love, marriage, and estrangement from her husband. The story has many unexpected turns, and is most true to life.

"The Flesh and the Spirit," the unusual serial now running, will continue through its third installment.

There will also appear two timely and readable little essays by Grace M. Sissons and Hildegard Lavender. Doctor Whitney's helpful article will treat of "Minor Skin Disorders."

Don't miss the All-Star Number of SMITH'S. On the news stands October 5th.

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XI

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 26

OCTOBER, 1917

Number 1

Out of the Storm

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "The Ancient Bondage," "The Lady of Rocca Pirenza," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

The strange calamity that befell a lovely young woman. We warn you not to begin the story unless you have time to finish it.

CHAPTER I.

ALWAYS thereafter it stood out in Walter Ebhart's memory as the strangest, the most portentous day of his life.

The carriage, bearing the two chief mourners home from the cemetery, swung from the roadway into the Winship drive. The sun, which had been hidden for a week behind an autumnal bank of mist and rain, shot suddenly through a rent that the wind had blown in the clouds. Mrs. Winship's Stoic mask fell apart, as it were, and beneath it showed the stricken face of a bereft mother.

"Oh, my poor little girl!" she cried. "My poor little girl! Walter, she loved the sunlight so, my poor baby! When she was a tiny, tiny thing, she used to try to gather the sunbeams into her fat little arms. My poor little Laurette!"

Walter Ebhart, who was to have married Laurette in another month but for this grim intervention of death, and who shared with Mrs. Winship in all the rites of bereavement, came out of the muse of self-reproach, relief,

shame, and gladness in which he had been withdrawn. He patted Laura Winship's hand tenderly. Poor soul! So she had forgotten the years between the time when the child had been truly hers and this sad day. His eyes were moistened anew by the glimpse into the recesses of her grief. He beheld Laurette herself afresh, a being distinct from himself, his ambitions, his desires—a strong and radiant personality, loving the sun.

"Walter, you—you cared for her? Truly? You would have made her happy? You would have tried to make her happy?"

"Dear Mrs. Winship! Of course, of course, I loved her! Who could help it?" He felt as if he meant it, seeing the dead girl for the moment in that detached way, apart from his own shifting, selfish wishes and needs. "She was bigger than I," he went on, "bigger hearted, bigger natured. I do not know why she loved me. But who could help adoring her?"

"She had the faults of her virtues," said the mother, suddenly, harshly calm again. "But you are right. She was

big of nature. I—I— Try to look upon me, Walter, as if she had lived and you—you two—you two—"

Her lips quivered and she ceased to speak. He kissed her cheek, grayish and faintly lined, and she clung for a second to his hand. Then the carriage grated to a standstill before the steps, and he helped her out into a primrose-lighted world. The long autumnal storm was over; the past was dead; there were new color and hope in the world.

The hall door opened and Emma, Mrs. Winship's dependent niece, came running down the drive, calling in that throaty bird's voice of hers, in which he had come to delight: "Aunt Laura, Aunt Laura!" In the doorway, he glimpsed the figure of Gormley, the old butler. With all the intensity of his poverty-stricken boyhood recollections, he liked families in which old butlers were a fixture; he liked houses of this sort, bespeaking, even in their arrogant ugliness, no new, untried prosperity. He was glad that Mrs. Winship wanted him to look upon her with the eyes of a son. He could be a better one to her now, he was sure, with Laurette gone, than he could ever have been with Laurette alive.

He took her tenderly by the arm. Emma was on the other side, but she shook herself free of the girl.

"Thank you, Emma," she said, in her usual voice. "I don't need any help."

Emma, very delicate and charming in her mourning, glanced quickly toward him, with that familiar little look of a shared, secret understanding in her eyes. He did not respond with his usual swift glance. Mrs. Winship was thinking of him kindly, generously; it was not seemly for him, so nearly Laurette Winship's husband, to exchange meaning glances with Emma. Besides, there would be plenty of time later.

He averted the dark, gray-green eyes

that were the most wonderful feature of his melancholy, beautifully carved face. And as he looked away, the most wonderful event in all his life befell.

They were on the top step of the little flight giving upon the stone-pillared porch. It ran around two sides of the house, and from the western end, partly screened by October's burnished copper and bronze of *Ampelopsis*, a figure approached them—a girl's. She was bare-headed, and the sun gleamed upon the dark reddish glory of her hair, seeming to aureole her in light. Her face had a wonderful, shining pallor, like lilies in a silver vase, and her eyes were intensely and darkly blue. She wore a frock of black, and Walter, who was something of a connoisseur in women's clothes, knew it at once for a poor, cheap, institutional thing. But she wore it like a coronation robe. The three of them stood sharply still at her appearance and watched her as she advanced. Her blue eyes studied them all. Then they singled out Mrs. Winship.

"I'm so glad you've come," she told the elder woman. Her voice was clear and musical, making deep harmonies like a violin. "I—I've been waiting to see you."

"To see me?" Mrs. Winship's abruptness was tinged with amazement.

"Yes. You are Mrs. Winship, are you not?"

"Yes. Shall we not go indoors?"

"My aunt," interposed Emma, with her funny little air of mouselike efficiency, "is suffering a great bereavement, and really should not be troubled at this—"

"Thank you, Emma. I will see this lady," said Mrs. Winship, interrupting dryly.

They all went into the house, and passed from the hall through velvet portières into a room from which Emma and the servants had removed every funeral trace. On the hearth be-

neath an ornate white marble mantel, a fire crackled and blazed. The western-looking windows were bright with the deepening light of late afternoon. There were no flowers here now that spoke of the chill and purity of death; only some bold, big, copper-and-red chrysanthemums glowed upon a table. Mrs. Winship, entering at the head of the little procession, drew one deep breath and let her eyes travel toward the portrait of Laurette, done the year in which she had come out—a proud young figure, a proud, fair face, with eyes that demanded of life submission to all her wishes, to all her caprices, even. Oh, a royal young girl, as royal young girls are seen across the foot-lights!

The mother brought her eyes back from the portrait and looked at the stranger. She, too, had dignity, but it was of a simpler, less dramatic sort. Hers seemed the sweet, compelling imperiousness of angels rather than the hauteur of stage princesses.

"Will you sit down?" The mistress of the house indicated a chair and seated herself opposite. She frowned, habitually, mechanically, upon Emma, birdlike busy at the tea wagon that Gormley had just trundled into the room. It seemed for a second that she would order the thing out again; then she appeared to resign herself to the necessary resumption of the routine of life, and, waiting for the tea which her niece was making, she looked again at the stranger.

"I don't think I know you?" she said, with a note of inquiry, but her voice lacked its usual harsh curtness.

"No, you do not." The girl's eyes became distended as if by fright; her lips whitened; a breath passed quivering through them. Then she stiffened to her task. "You do not know me," she repeated. "But I saw you last week, in the hospital—St. Barnabas'. You were on a visit of inspection. The

nurse told me your name—and of your efficiency—and of your great charity. And so, when I was discharged to-day, I came here. It was a presumption. But you are connected with St. Barnabas——"

"A director. My father was one of the founders. I have always been interested in it. But still——"

"Mrs. Winship, I came to ask you to help me——"

"There is an associated social-service bureau connected with all the city hospitals," interrupted Emma, putting a cup into Mrs. Winship's unresisting hand. "Really, Aunt Laura, when you are so unstrung, ought you to be bothered like this? Perhaps this"—Emma hesitated a second and looked at the stranger—"this young woman doesn't realize the—the intrusion of which she is guilty?"

"Emma, you are too solicitous." Mrs. Winship was coldly impatient and resentful of Emma's care. "Will you tell me"—she addressed the other girl again—"who you are and what you can do? And why you did not do as my—my niece suggests—go to the usual agencies for help?"

The blue eyes of the stranger grew black in their intensity.

"I don't know who I am or what I can do. I don't know where I came from, or how. I—I wanted an unusual sort of help. They told me you were away when I came here—the man told me, and didn't want me to wait. But I waited out there on the piazza. I wanted to ask you to help me to find myself."

"Preposterous!" murmured Emma.

"Oh, I think I read something of this case," interposed Walter, coming forward. "It was in the papers the day after the wreck—after Laurette's accident. You would not have read it, Mrs. Winship."

"It was the morning of the day when Laurette was hurt that I was last at the

hospital," said Mrs. Winship, considering. "I haven't read the papers since. What did it say, Walter?"

"It was merely a paragraph, stating that a policeman had found a young woman wandering near the water in Lakeside Park about three o'clock one morning, that he had rung for the St. Barnabas ambulance, and that, after a few days' observation, she had been found to be suffering from amnesia. Had not the wreck crowded everything to one side in the papers—and I dare say in the hospitals, too—there would probably have been more about it. There generally is about that sort of case."

"Surely the authorities at St. Barnabas," began Emma, with her deprecating little air of protest, "are the proper persons for the sort of help this lady desires."

Years of experience had been quite powerless to teach her that her suggestions were always signals for contrary action on her aunt's part.

"I will investigate your story and will help you if I can," the older woman cut in decisively, turning toward the stranger.

"Thank you," murmured the girl. Her face had crimsoned painfully at Emma's remark. "There seemed no reason why I should stay on in the hospital. They said I had no physical ailment and no mental one with which they could cope. Doctor Thornton wished me to enter his own sanatorium, so that he could have me under observation, but——"

"Ah, yes!" answered Mrs. Winship dryly. "Thornton! I am glad you came to see me. How did you find me?"

"I remembered your name. I looked it up in the directory, and I asked my way of policemen."

"Then you have not forgotten how to read. That is something to go upon. Emma, suppose you take this young lady to the chintz room. And—and

look among Laurette's things"—she spoke firmly—"for some suitable clothes for her. They will fit her, I think. Walter, will you please call up the hospital, and get Miss Alston, in the superintendent's office, or, if she isn't in, Miss Lewis, the head nurse in the psychopathic ward?"

She arose. She looked at Laurette's portrait, but no longer with quivering lips. She had always been a woman of action, and to take hold upon this problem somehow soothed and heartened her. Emma, with unavailing reluctance in every line of her little figure, rose to take the strange girl upstairs. Her mildly mutinous eyes sought Walter's, and his rested upon her in kind rebuke.

"We should be deeply grateful," he told her gently, as he held the portières back for them to pass, "for any problem that will divert Mrs. Winship's mind from brooding upon her grief."

Emma's soft face melted into acquiescence.

"Of course that is so," she agreed. "I hadn't thought of it that way—only as a worry for her. How good of you to be thinking of her when you, yourself——"

She did not finish the sentence in words, but with a look of almost devout admiration. He liked the look for two reasons—he always liked the admiration and kindness of women, and he was especially glad that Emma apparently agreed that certain things between them should be forgotten, that she apparently accepted the convention of his great grief. She had tact, Emma! If only she would contrive not to rub Mrs. Winship so invariably the wrong way!

Then he glanced at the straight young figure following Emma up the broad, shallow, curved stairs toward the chintz room. He felt suddenly mean and hollow; he was pricked with a sharp stab of perception of his unworthiness



The three of them stood sharply still and watched her as she advanced. Her blue eyes studied them all. Then they singled out Mrs. Winship.

to dwell with clean, starlight-fine things. In the library, Mrs. Winship, brief, autocratic as usual, was talking into the telephone transmitter. When she had stated the situation, she listened to the replies from the other end of the wire, nodding occasionally.

"Thank you, Miss Alston," she said at last. "I have it all now, I think. She was picked up the morning of the day of—of the accident—the morning after the great storm. No, of course, I shan't repeat your indiscretion about

Doctor Thornton anywhere where it could get back to him. Thank you very much."

She turned to Walter.

"The girl's story seems perfectly straight, according to the hospital records. Miriam Alston says they would have been glad to keep the case for further study, but— You never met Thornton, did you? Evidently the patient's instinct of self-preservation wasn't lost when she lost her memory. He's a fool about women. And his

wife is enough to justify him—jealous, exacting creature!”

Jealous and exacting! Walter thought of Laurette, shut away from all the sad and glad impulses of life, and again that miserable, selfish sense of escape filled him. Though, of course, he was no satyr, like the gifted Thornton, chief of St. Barnabas' visiting staff.

“It's fortunate that she came to you,” he said. “What do you think you had better do about her, Mrs. Winship?”

“There won't be much difficulty, I think,” said Laura Winship; she spoke a little desolately. “A girl like that doesn't disappear from her circle without a hue and cry being raised about her. We'll advertise that she is with us—and then, in a day or two, we'll lose her to her people.”

“But suppose they don't materialize, her people?”

“Well, I can think of greater hardships,” she answered dryly, “than having a visitor like that abide a while in one's house. Can't you?”

“She is beautiful,” he agreed. “But of course we know nothing about her.”

“We can look at her face and know the most important things to be known about her. And we know—we *know*—the emptiness of this house!” She stared out through the windows into the bleak autumnal world from which the sun had gone.

“You have Emma,” he reminded her gently, “who is devoted to you——”

“Emma!” She arose. There was impatience and scorn in her voice. She moved toward the stairway. “Oh, yes, I have Emma,” she conceded. “You will stay with me for dinner, Walter?”

“Of course, dear Mrs. Winship.”

She moved out through the doorway and ascended the stairs. He waited, book in hand, for Emma's reappearance. He wished again, most devoutly, that Emma would not always contrive to rub her aunt the wrong way! He felt aggrieved by Emma's lack of tact.

If only she could have managed to be a favorite with that overbearing woman—such a favorite as he, it seemed, was about to become—the future would have looked smoother to him.

Not, of course, that he was in any way bound to Emma, he assured himself quickly. Only, if he should ever wish to be bound to her, it would be much more comfortable all around if she were a favorite with the holder of the strings of the weighty Winship purse.

Then again he was swept by a wave of self-contempt. He seemed to see the wonderful, dark, bright eyes of the unknown staring into his mean soul, not contemptuously, as Laurette would have stared, not heartbrokenly, as old Aunt Anna would have stared, but uncomprehendingly, as one of heaven's unspotted angels would have stared.

Then Emma came softly pattering back, and he adjusted his handsome, melancholy features into an appropriate expression of pensive welcome.

CHAPTER II.

No one in Daxton had ever heard Emma Houghton fail in the tone of tender respect toward her aunt; no one, in the days now ended, had ever heard her suggest, in look or voice or manner, that she was jealous of her Cousin Laurette. She was always the perfect dependent—watchful for the opportunity to be of unobtrusive service, ready to do all the necessary things that no one else in the household wanted to do. She was never too tired for picquet with the old-fashioned visitors who desired that form of entertainment. She was never unintelligent about trumps when she played bridge opposite to choleric old gentlemen to whom a forgetfulness about trumps was the blackest crime of which a degenerate race was capable. She never minded riding backward on the uncom-

fortable little seats of taxis. She had an unerring instinct for the placing of footstools and cushions. She could read dreary columns of news without allowing her voice to become monotonous. She was a genius at guessing the proper moment to lower window shades for tired eyes. She embroidered exquisitely, as beautifully as the nuns who had taught her. She accepted Laurette's old dresses and cloaks with every appearance of gratitude, and developed great skill in revamping them so that only the most keenly observing of their acquaintances would be able to recognize the result on sight. She kept the household books; she was the family's purchasing agent, leaving her aunt free for her beloved committees and Laurette free for pleasure.

And yet there was no one in Daxton who believed that Emma loved her Aunt Laura or her Cousin Laurette.

It did not, after all, require any superhuman skill in psychology among the Daxtonians to reach the conclusion that Emma must almost hate her generous relatives. It doesn't require courses in philosophy to teach the human race that only love begets love. And not within the memory of the oldest Daxtonian had that great lady of the town, Mrs. Julian Winship, displayed any semblance of love for the child by whom she so conscientiously "did her duty," as the elder generation saw duty.

A good many of the older people remembered when Emma had been brought to the big Winship house. It was only two years after Julian Winship had married Laura Bronson; it was a few months before Laurette had been born. The gossips of the town had buzzed, for although the child was called a niece, every one knew that neither Laura Bronson nor Julian Winship had brothers or sisters. And Julian had been—well, certainly not strait-laced; and Laura was a Spar-

tan. It would be exactly like her, they all declared, to insist upon caring for the—the—unfortunate result of one of Julian's *amours*, if she knew of it. Though, of course, it might also be perfectly true, as the Winships said, that Emma Houghton was the orphaned child of a cousin, who was taught to call her new-found relatives "uncle" and "aunt" only because that was an appropriate title for her baby lips to utter to their maturity.

Well, Julian had lived scarcely long enough to welcome into the world the beautiful little daughter whom his Laura had borne him. And his will, bequeathing everything unreservedly to his widow, had given no hint of any other relationship on his part toward the little orphaned Emma than the one designated. Emma had continued to live in the big, ugly, comfortable house, and to be fed and clothed and doctored and taught with conscientious care. But even in the days of her appealing littleness and helplessness, she had not been loved. The mother's heart had been completely centered in her own baby. Her very goodness to the dependent child had been tinged with something like an abrupt, impatient dislike.

And in that atmosphere of ungenerous kindness toward herself and of unstinted adoration toward the other child, Emma had lived for ten unbroken years, learning to keep her thoughts quite strictly to herself, learning to bear her disappointments without lamentations, learning even, at the last, to banish from her eyes the look of frightened hope and appeal, the doglike look, that begs a caress, but has ample experience in not receiving it. And then, when she was twelve years old, she had been sent to a convent boarding school. She had not come home for her holidays, and when she had reappeared, at seventeen, she had been the perfect feminine dependent.

Walter Ebhart, waiting for her in the library of the Winship house on the afternoon of the day when his betrothed wife had been buried, was conscious of her story as he had seldom been conscious of it before. Walter had never been greatly given to preoccupation with other people's affairs. As far back as he could remember, he had been quite intent upon his own business.

His memory did not extend back to parents of his own. Recollected life began for him in his Aunt Anna's tiny flat. Aunt Anna, plain, hard-working, poorly paid public-school teacher, had been indubitably his aunt; there was no glamour of mystery about his parentage. He had been her sister's baby—the sister who had outraged all decent small-town New England traditions by marrying not only a foreigner, but a bartender in a saloon which the girl passed on her way to work. Aunt Anna had been fully convinced that she paid for her folly with her life. At any rate, she had died when Walter was born; and by and by the foreign father had wanted to go back to his beloved Bavaria, and had been glad to arrange with the heart-hungry spinster to take over little Walter.

From such rude beginnings he had sprung, and from the dinginess of life with Aunt Anna had incongruously blossomed that taste for luxury, that deep-rooted desire for ease, for grace, for pleasantness in life, which marked his young manhood. At what age, he sometimes wondered, had he first discovered that he might acquire these things more easily by a due investment of his charms than by an investment of his more solid capacities? Even as a little boy, playing in the dusty street before Aunt Anna's flat, he had found that the women of the neighborhood commiserated his hurts more readily than those of the other boys, that doughnuts and gingerbread, on frying

and baking days, came more inevitably to him than to the others. He must have been about ten when the explanation was vouchsafed to him—it was because he was so handsome!

"Like a little angel he looks, an' a bit sadlike," one woman had said to a neighbor who had accused her of softness in giving him, unsolicited, a penny for candy.

He had gone home and had looked at himself carefully. He did not resemble an angel to his own mind—angels were fixedly associated in his fancy with golden ringlets, and his hair was dark and short-cropped—but there *was* something about his eyes, he admitted to himself in later days. Indeed, when his knowledge of the points of beauty was better established, he knew that he was an unusual man in looks—lithe and sinuous as a forest creature, dark, with features that a cameo carver might have modeled, and with eyes of infinite capacity of appeal.

He was quick to learn, though by no means ambitious of knowledge. He had a native grace of mind as well as of body; his were not the "rough-house" jokes of the other boys, but delicate pleasantries, pointed now and then with wit. Aunt Anna adored him, slaved for him, instructed him, dressed him, while she could, to display his beauty, and grounded him in what was to her the greatest creed in the world—the creed of gentility.

And so, from those far-away days, he had helped himself forward by means of women. He had not, as a rule, played fast-and-loose with them, but he had used them for his purposes. That his purposes happened to be ease from financial strain, the securing of a comfortable berth in the world, rather than the conventional pleasures of a young man, was merely chance. Young and old, he had helped himself along by their aid, from the days of the doughnuts and the moist pennies from

hot, hard-working hands. They had all succumbed to his gift of appealing, romantic beauty, to his kind, meaninglessly protective air. Landladies, in that drab past of his, had let him run up bills he could never pay; laundresses had never failed to deliver his clean linen, no matter how frequently he had failed to reciprocate with the price of the cleansing; sales girls had dropped

through it, he had met Laurette Winship.

Poor Laurette! Upon what a career of true gentility had he been about to enter with her! He thought of that rather than of the girl herself, snatched suddenly from all the gladness of life. To be the husband of the richest woman in a good-sized manufacturing city—what a point of vantage from which to essay all sorts of flights into the higher gentilities—into a mild patronage of art, into travel, into culture of all sorts!

Yet it had not been altogether a dishonest relation on his side, the one be-



"No, no." She shook her head after she had repeated the word two or three times.

"No. At first I thought— But no, I don't know any Caroline."

other customers to wait upon him; waitresses in horrible quick-lunch rooms had advised him as to the day's best viands. All sorts of women had served him. But never, until he had come to Daxton, had fate thrown him into the company of a woman whom he had desired to marry. His position in the real-estate office where he had found employment was a negligible one, though it was, as poor Aunt Anna would have said, "genteel." And

tween him and Laurette. She had attracted him enormously at first. To be sure, if he had not known at once of her wealth, he would never have sued and won her, no matter how much her bright beauty, her high, proud spirit, might have lured him. Long ago he had put the thought of a poverty-stricken marriage out of the list of his possibilities. He would marry the fortune that his mother had neglected to bequeath him and that Aunt Anna had

never accumulated for him. But Laurette herself, as well as her money, had magnetized him—at first.

So handsome, so self-willed! She had never had to pick and choose her way through the tortuous paths of poverty or dependence! She had never been forced to learn deference and all the servile graces of the poor. The arrogant honesty of the girl had attracted him who had chosen for himself a part of so much deviousness. Her self-will had at first been as beautiful to him as the white radiance of a saint might be to a dark, sinning soul; it had been the badge of her independence, of her pride that had never been forced to quail, to bow its head. He had admired it extravagantly.

But by and by, when his good looks and his soft, deprecating charm of manner, his gift for seeming tender and protective, had worked their destined effect; when he had won Laurette's promise to marry him; when he had even succeeded in subduing Mrs. Winship's violent objections to him—how his fiancée had come to weary him! How all that imperiousness of sincerity, that determination to brook no interference with her desires, had irked him! How it had physically tired him, like the glare of sunlight on a shadeless sea! And then how appealing to him became the demure, almost furtive charm of Emma Houghton! Emma was of his spiritual kin; she had learned to achieve her ends by dark little devices; she had been trained in the school of dependence.

Their affair, such as it was, had been discreet enough. Neither of them would risk the future. Emma wanted the home and the clothes and the comforts so contemptuously bestowed upon her; Walter meant to marry Laurette and her fortune. It behooved them to be careful, restrained, decorous. They had had no illusions as to where they would find themselves if the Winship

ladies, those scornfully honest women, should ever discover their dissimulation. So their ardors had been tame enough—furtive and ugly, but not devastating. There had been little notes, little glances, pressures of the hand on the stairway, confidences in quiet corners. Sometimes there had been little meetings when Laurette had gone away.

He had always wondered whether Emma was aware of the story that was whispered about her, to the effect that she was the natural daughter of old Winship, brought home by his wife through some stern, fierce sense of duty, fed, clothed, educated, and provided for through the same unloving coercion, but shut intensely out of the woman's heart. He did not know. He had no means of discovering. The Winships were as contemptuous of gossip as of most other things that might run counter to their wills. Still, Mrs. Winship treated Emma with a curt indifference. Perhaps it was true.

Yet she was not a soft woman to any one. He remembered the clashes between her and Laurette. Remembering, he felt a great wave of relief again flowing over him. Coward and cad he might be—he admitted it—but he had his secret honesties, too. He knew that he was glad he had not been obliged to marry Laurette Winship, with all her beauty, all her money! Great heavens, what an escape! He would have been caught between and beneath both those ruthless natures.

If only Emma had tact with her aunt! He cried it impatiently to his soul. For he still greatly desired the Winship properties, and, though the tragedy of Laurette's taking-off had purged him temporarily of errant desires, he knew that, to certain of his moods, Emma would again prove seductive, Emma demure, pretty, soft—a mouse, a kitten, a dove, no sun-soaring eagle, like the poor dead girl. And

if only Emma had played her cards rightly with Mrs. Winship, what more natural than that she should come to take the dead girl's place in the mother's bereaved heart, and that, in time—in due, decorous time—he, Walter Ebhart, might be allowed to transfer to her the remnants of his affection, also?

The situation would be even more pleasing in that case than before, for Emma could lay no possessive claim to the family moneys. She would enter marriage with no great, brutal advantage over him, as Laurette would have done. It would have been perfect, if only Emma had not contrived always to antagonize her benefactress. He put all the blame upon Emma, although not for his life could he have advised her how to play a more winning hand with the elder woman.

She came in now, and on her small, pretty features there was an expression of greater annoyance than he had ever seen there before.

"Your aunt has gone upstairs," he said supererogatorily, as he rose and drew a chair toward the fire for her. "She's asked me to stay for dinner. What an iron woman she is!"

"Is she?" said Emma coldly.

"She's borne all the horror of this so wonderfully—when you consider her years." Walter was aware that he himself was not bearing it badly; he must accentuate the difference between his age and that of the stricken mother.

"Of course it was an awful shock to us all," said Emma, abating a little of her sharpness and becoming soft and natural again. "Poor Laurette! To go out in the morning, full of life and beauty and health and—love—" Her voice broke effectively.

"Poor Laurette!" he echoed dutifully.

"And usually such things can be blamed upon some one. Perhaps they can here—I don't know? Is there to be an investigation of the wreck?"

"Yes. But it is, I imagine, only a matter of form. The landslide had occurred between the time the train before passed around the curve and the time the Pittsburgh express came along. The trackwalker is the only person who may have slipped up in his duty. Of course those terrific rains—especially that hurricane of the night before—were responsible for the loosening of the earth. No, I suppose the act of Providence is a truer verdict this time than in most cases of the sort."

"Poor Laurette!" sighed Emma again, this time with a touch of true emotion in her voice. "To think that she had gone on to New York for her last fittings! It's all too sad. But, Walter—"

"Yes?" he prompted, as she stopped.

"I don't agree with you about Aunt Laura. About her being so wonderfully Stoic, I mean. I think she's utterly unlike herself. I—I'm worried about her. It's not in the least like her to take a tale like the one of this strange woman—"

"But the hospital corroborates it," he answered, annoyed with Emma at once and unaccountably.

Her pretty mouth set itself in a line of obstinacy.

"Yes. But that doesn't prove that she is—an angelic visitant fit to wear Laurette's things, to be taken into—Laurette's—place. She may not have lost her memory at all. She may be a clever impostor."

"Hardly, with that face of hers," he dissented coldly.

"I'm going to call up now," said Emma, with unusual sharpness of decision, "and get the newspapers to take it up. If we leave it till to-morrow, Aunt Laura won't want it done—you'll see! I tell you she's not iron. She's utterly done up, and no more like herself than—than—"

"I wouldn't advise you to take it

upon yourself to call up the newspapers," he answered coldly.

"I must do what I think right for Aunt Laura," she answered sweetly, moving toward the telephone. But on her way she paused beside his chair for a second. "Surely, Walter, we aren't going to quarrel, you and I?"

"Of course not, Emma," he answered guardedly.

"When," she went on, mild eyes full upon him, "we should so soon have been like brother and sister to each other."

He looked at her, but her eyes did not falter. He could not for the life of him tell whether she was testing out some of his old, furtive semilove-making, or announcing to him the plane upon which she expected him to stand with her. And while, flushed and a little uncomfortable, he debated, at a loss for a reply, she moved on to the telephone, and he heard her asking for the *Star* and then for one Mr. Clifford Harrington, of its staff.

How the dickens did Emma know a Mr. Clifford Harrington of the *Star*, Walter wondered, not quite pleased. He was reassured by her address to that person when he reached the other end of the wire. Apparently she had only a print acquaintance with him. She was referring to his skill in solving some mystery that had occupied the local press a month or two before.

And then Mrs. Winship swept into the room, by her side the girl from the hospital. When she heard what her niece was saying, a dark flush of anger stained her drab, middle-aged face. But the girl, in a straight-hanging white frock, moved joyously toward Emma.

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" she cried in her lovely voice, vibrant like the strings of a violin. "How good of you to lose no time!"

"Shall I go on calling up the other papers, Aunt Laura?" asked Emma sweetly, after she had smiled a fleeting appreciation of the stranger's gratitude.

"Since you have begun," replied the older woman ungraciously, "you may as well go on. Though, personally, I think your haste is—er—most inhospitable!"

"You didn't think that, did you?" Emma pleaded with the strange girl, eyes and voice full of sorrow and hurt.

"I think it was dear of you! Oh, you can't understand, Mrs. Winship, how mad—how mad—I am to find myself again!"

"If finding yourself will not mean that we lose you—" faltered the great lady of Daxton.

But she did not go on. Gormley announced dinner, and Emma was in conversation with the *Sun*.

CHAPTER III.

The newspapers of Daxton were glad enough to coöperate to the fullest extent with Mrs. Winship. They were always ready to do that, no matter what the occasion, for Mrs. Winship was the great lady of their community. But this time she was giving them a genuine sensation and not merely the opportunity to advertise her charities or her multitudinous causes.

They all gathered, after dinner, in the library—the alert young men of the *Star*, the *Sun*, the *Times-Chronicle*, and the *Despatch-Herald*. The strange girl and Emma had remained in the dining room, and at first Walter supported his almost-mother-in-law in her interview.

They appreciated the picturesqueness of the story, these young men trained to appreciate the unusual, the picturesque. They visioned, one could see, the scene as Mrs. Winship described it—her return from the burial of her only child, her beautiful daughter, along with the man who was to have been that daughter's husband; they saw the sun shoot out of the clouds, after the phenomenal rains and storms of the past fortnight, and, advancing toward

the two mourners in that glorious light, the girl who claimed that she did not know who she was, and whose claim was substantiated by the hospital authorities.

It was Mr. Clifford Harrington, of the *Star*, who first broke the silence when Mrs. Winship had finished talking. She had ended on the question:

"What do you think of it, gentlemen? What shall I do? What shall we do, rather, for the young lady is more anxious than words can describe to recover her lost identity."

Mr. Harrington's theory was briefly enunciated.

"Fraud, in all probability," he said nonchalantly. "They often are, these amnesia victims."

Mrs. Winship smiled. She had rather expected that suggestion, she said. In answer to it, she was merely going to call her guest into the room. Oh, yes, the young men might ask her any questions they desired; the young lady was only too anxious to recover her lost identity. And with that she pressed a button and told Gormley to summon the lady.

Even Mr. Harrington, whose specialty was crime, dismissed the fraud theory as soon as the girl turned her grave eyes upon him and said, in her lovely, earnest, deep-throated voice, that she would be glad to answer, in so far as she could, any question he might ask. There was too noble a simplicity about her for doubts of her to linger in her presence.

They took pictures of her in every conceivable pose, and they published descriptions of her beneath the pictures. They sent to Mrs. Winship the records of missing women in Daxton for the period in which the lovely unknown had been found. But in all the dreary, tragic list there was none who remotely suggested her.

They tested her accomplishments. They tried her on foreign tongues and

found that she had a working knowledge of German, French, and Italian—the sort of acquaintance a well-educated and somewhat traveled young woman would have. She knew music, but she could not play the piano. She smiled happily and became reacquainted with old friends when Thackeray, Dickens, George Meredith, Shakespeare, were put into her hands. But of the circumstances under which she had read those authors, learned the motifs of the operas, studied the languages, she could give them no hint. The hospital record—"October 10: —, female, white, about twenty-four, blue eyes, auburn hair, five feet five inches, one hundred and thirty-five pounds; found on shore in Lakeside Park; brought in by Patrolman Shields; suffering from amnesia"—that remained, in effect, the sum total of knowledge which was available about the girl.

They tried her on names. Did any of these sound familiar to her—Abby, Alice, Amy, Anna—and so on down a long alphabetical list? She listened with her heart in her eyes, eager, eager. She interrupted them at "Caroline," with a hand uplifted, and her lips formed the syllable quietly.

"No, no." She shook her head after she had repeated the word two or three times. "No. At first I thought— But no, I don't know any Caroline."

And then she set herself to listen patiently until the unlikely "Zenobia" sounded the end of their list and she negated that with a smile. A whole city directory of surnames proved equally fruitless in arousing her memory of her own, or of that of any of her friends.

"We shall have to call you something, my dear," Mrs. Winship said after the reporters had gone, and the girl acquiesced. She was indifferent as to what the name should be, and Walter, Mrs. Winship, and Emma tossed sug-



Walter advanced to meet her, took her hand, bowed low over it, and then, with a sudden impulse, graceful and unexpected, raised it to his lips.

gestions from one to another for half an hour.

"Blanche, because she is so fair," said Emma, who had fallen into line in regard to the interesting case domiciled under the Winship roof.

"Aimée," said Walter, and then, as the eyes of two of the women sharpened upon him, he added: "For assuredly she must have been the beloved in some home!"

"Theodora," said Mrs. Winship at last, and they all knew, as she said it, that Theodora would be the name by which they would know the girl. "The gift of God. For so, my dear, I think

you have been to me—to us. And—perhaps—perhaps—— Who knows?"

Looking at her stern face, newly softened, Walter and Emma perceived a dawning hope in her that the strange girl might, in turn, find her a gift of God. Emma's pretty, sharp, small features tightened as her mind grasped the significance of her Aunt Laura's expression. But to Walter, more subtly compounded of fine perceptions and selfish inhibitions, the older woman's mood was pathetic and admirable. He divined remorse as well as loneliness in her; she would fain be as a gift of God to this unknown, radiant pres-

ence, both because loss had made her newly out-reaching and because her conscience convicted her of failures toward her own daughter.

The instinct within him that perceived all this and perceived it with sympathy was suddenly debased by the perception of how such a mood of Mrs. Winship's might fall in with new desires already beginning to germinate within himself.

CHAPTER IV.

As the weeks passed, there grew up in the Winship house two unspoken, but deeply insistent desires. Mrs. Winship, caught as she had been at a moment of unwonted impressionability, when grief had rendered plastic for a time the rocky fabric of her nature, grew to hope, almost with passion, that her guest Theodora might never recover her memory and with it all the lost relationships of her life. The girl had touched fresh springs of feeling in her; she wanted to keep that youth and beauty, that grave simplicity, that exquisite, unstained honesty, near her. And she began, unconsciously at first, and then with growing intention, to hinder the efforts to discover Theodora's home and family and identity. After all, she reasoned, what more could it profit the unknown to find herself than to remain lost? How many souls in the grim world would give their hopes of a shadowy paradise for just the gift that had been vouchsafed this girl—the expunging of all that had been written, the spreading before them of a clean, untouched page on which to begin to write anew?

On the other hand, there was Emma. Emma possessed all the tenacity of purpose that is covered by mouse-colored braids and a soft, smooth, shy-seeming personality. Emma was determined that the search for belongings for this visitor should never halt in so far as

she could keep it active. When fate had so suddenly removed Laurette Winship from her path, it had seemed to lie quite straight and fair before her. She had said that Aunt Laura, in her grief and loneliness, must surely turn to her, and she, Emma, was prepared to be entirely worthy the affection that must inevitably be lavished upon her. She and Walter would together make life worth while for the bereaved woman and would have, in addition to the tranquil applause of their consciences, their deserved worldly reward, when that bereaved woman accompanied her blessing of them with the opening of the well-filled Winship coffers.

That an accident so wanton as the appearance of this appealing girl had interposed between her and the gradual fulfillment of her dreams was almost unbearable. But Emma had never been given to futile repinings. Long ago she had learned that the sorrows of a dependent are best concealed. Concealed, they may be overcome; flaunted, indulged, they are, as it were, but invitations to fresh disaster. Wherefore, locking in her furtive breast all the jealous anxiety that gnawed at her, she tried by every silent indirection to thwart her aunt's unspoken wish. That Walter Ebhart day by day gave plainer evidence of sharing Mrs. Winship's desires in regard to Theodora only added power to her efforts.

It was she who, first perceiving that the girl shuddered and drew back when about to enter a motor car, called attention to the action as a clew. It pointed, she said, to a motor accident as the cause of Theodora's loss of memory.

The girl herself welcomed the suggestion. Her blue eyes, so intensely sapphire that at a little distance they seemed black, grew brilliant with hope. But Mrs. Winship and Walter Ebhart affected to treat the suggestion as negligible. It was far more likely, they de-

clared, trying to hide an unscientific warmth of feeling under scientific verbiage, that automobiles were merely symptomatic of a general nervousness than that they were causal. But Emma, with a gentle persistence that won Theodora's gratitude, was insistent that some investigation be made of motor accidents in and about Daxton on the day preceding the girl's admission to the hospital.

She made the suggestion with her eyes fixed steadily upon Walter. More than two months had passed since the railroad disaster had released him from the bonds he had been wont to declare galling because they kept him from her. And during those two months of freedom, he had remained away from her far more steadfastly than when Laurette had been alive. Emma was not lacking in shrewdness. She divined the delicate new tendrils that were weaving about his heart, incasing it against her.

The unfaltering, calm, mild gaze she turned on him as she made the suggestion that lit lamps of hope in Theodora's eyes was notice served to him that whatever stand he took now would be unmistakable evidence to her of his truth or falsity.

Walter, looking from one of the women to another—from Theodora, tremulously radiant, to Mrs. Winship, grimly opposed to any course that threatened her possession of her new treasure, to Emma, deliberately trying to thwart him in the deepest and, as he felt, the holiest wish he had ever known—was caught in the coil of his weaknesses. Emma had become unluring to him, but the same cowardice that had once held him silent before a growing coldness toward Laurette afflicted him now. He did not dare accept the challenge in that soft-seeming glance; he did not dare tell Emma, in effect, that he would fain be through with her and free to follow this fresh light.

"I agree with you, Mother Winship," he said, "that there isn't a chance in a hundred—in a thousand—that Theodora's aversion to motors has anything to do with her loss of memory. But, on the other hand, have we the right to neglect a single clew, however vague, however doubtful?"

His reward was the face that Theodora raised to him, rather than the momentary quieting of the cold suspicion in Emma's eyes.

But when the files of the Daxton papers for the days immediately preceding Theodora's arrival at St. Barnabas were studied, and the cases of motor loss and accident they reported were investigated, there was found nothing that could be connected with the girl. Emma, with a persistence that burned within her like a flame, wanted the investigation made more searching; she wanted automobile-insurance records searched. The young mystery expert of the Daxton Star received that suggestion with a stare of real respect directed toward the mouselike little person whom he had always overlooked in the conferences to which he had been a party at Mrs. Winship's. Glancing at her with approbation, he was rewarded by finding her rather a pretty little thing, by Jove! The cordiality of his commendation brought a flush to Emma's soft, pale cheek.

But the investigation of the insurance records brought no result except to win for young Mr. Harrington a rebuke from his chief for wasting his time on "dead stuff."

"The Flood, the fall of Nineveh, and everything else that happened before the day after to-morrow," announced this gentleman, in what he conceived to be the most modern manner, "is too old for the Daxton Star. Bring in live stuff. Go out after live stuff. No more burning excitement over Buchanan's election and contemporaneous events."

But young Mr. Harrington continued to give a certain amount of his spare time to the study of the case of "the Winship unknown," as he called Theodora. Emma encouraged his attention to it; encouraged his pretense of mutinous criticism of his chief; made him cups of tea and allowed him to smoke innumerable cigarettes while Mrs. Winship and Theodora were out for brief winter-afternoon airings behind the old-fashioned, glossy chestnuts. With a certain skill, she arranged it several times so that Walter Ebhart surprised the young reporter at her tea table; but when she detected that relief and not jealous rage was Walter's reaction to her ruse, she gave up that profitless pastime. Her intention had not been to loosen the hold of the past that she and he had known together.

One afternoon Clifford Harrington fairly burst into the house. Theodora and Mrs. Winship had gone on their regular Thursday visit to the children's ward at St. Barnabas'. Walter was coming in to dinner, but he had evaded a telephone invitation from Emma to arrive before dinner and to have a half hour's talk with her. She was glad to see young Harrington even before he cried out:

"Eureka! I believe I've got her! And now we'll see how old Next-week-alone-is-news Dempsey will feel!"

Dempsey was Harrington's chief on the *Star*.

Emma was not interested in Dempsey, but she purred something that Harrington interpreted as sympathy with his journalistic point of view before she said:

"But what is it? And how did you find it out? Tell me, quick, while I make you some tea. Oh, how happy Theodora will be!" She clasped pretty white hands over her black frock in thanksgiving for Theodora.

"Oh, don't go on quite so fast! There may be nothing in it, after all. But I

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believe there is! I have a hunch. Haven't I always told you I felt——"

"Yes, yes," murmured Emma, wishing to shorten Mr. Harrington's description of his own interesting presentiments and prognostications. "But tell me what it is."

"A girl, Bessie Davidson, eloped with her father's chauffeur—and father's car, also, and a wad of father's money, I believe—on the day before this girl—Miss Theodora—was picked up in the park."

"Bessie Davidson?" Emma's voice expressed disappointment. "I never heard of any Davidsons in Daxton."

"My dear girl, put on your thinking cap," advised Harrington importantly. "Elopers from Daxton wouldn't elope to Daxton, would they? The Davidsons are Haverford people, two hundred miles west of here, in Ohio. The elopers were on their way to New York—of course. To catch a steamer. And Daxton is on the best motor road from Haverford——"

"But what——" began Emma helplessly. "But why——"

"I'll tell it to you straight. You remember that when we were looking into the car situation, we came across a record of a car found abandoned about six miles out of town? Empty? You remember, robes and fittings—if it had had them—gone, license number gone, so that there would be less likelihood of tracing the thieves who had stripped it—as we reasoned then? You remember?"

"I remember something about a car that was found outside the city limits, for which no owner seemed to be forthcoming," said Emma.

She said it a little sulkily. It did not seem to her that there was any probability that an eloping Bessie Davidson would be one with Theodora, starlike and serene. However, perhaps there was something yet to come to offset the

mere psychology of the case. Harrington went on:

"Well, that car was a Dimmer-Boxton, which was what Bessie Davidson eloped in. You see, the Davidsons are new-rich people, and they wanted it kept dark that their daughter had committed the faux pas of eloping with a chauffeur—married at that! No vulgar publicity for them. They might be able to get Bessie back, not too much damaged in reputation, provided they kept their own counsel and were prepared to buy off the chauffeur whenever he felt like turning an easy penny by blackmail. So they didn't send out a general alarm or stir up the police department. They engaged the Burkertons to handle the pursuit and search for them. Well, the clues led toward Daxton, but a little west of here they disappeared, on the very day before this girl, Theodora, was found wandering in the park."

"But where is the man?"

"The man, of course, was a crook." Harrington stated his theory as if it were fact. "He didn't want Bessie as much as he wanted some of Father Davidson's money. The girl had a neat collection of bonds and certificates of her own, also, which have all disappeared. You see what happened."

Young Harrington threw away the cigarette he had just lighted and lighted another, as he paced the room and outlined the situation. His face was flushed with the intensity of his convictions.

"No, I don't," declared Emma with some exasperation. "I don't at all see what happened."

"Why, they rob father and elope, Bessie and the chauffeur. And probably, as they approach Daxton, the man gives her a dose of dope or a knock-out blow, or in some way renders her temporarily harmless. He possesses himself of all the securities she has gathered together. He drops her and he strips the Dimmer-Boxton—a recent one at that—of every-

thing that could serve as identification. Dimmer-Boxtons by themselves are as plentiful as interurban trolley cars and have no more individuality. He dumps Bessie out to wander, in her doped condition——"

"But he must be an awful villain!" protested Emma, sincerely shocked.

To her, villainy was real in proportion to its crudity, and it never occurred to her, in bending all the conditions of her own little world to her own little aims, that she could possibly be regarded as guilty of anything with an ugly name.

"I don't suppose he was the Chevalier Bayard in disguise," agreed Harrington. He lit another cigarette. Then he sat down, suddenly relaxed and needing sympathy. "Don't you think there may be something in it?" He pleaded with her to be kind, and Emma was always kind.

"Of course there may be," she agreed. "Only—we mustn't leave any ends loose. How did you learn all this?"

"Flynn, of the Burkertons, is an old pal of mine, and he has just come to Daxton on a case for the foundry. I met up with him, and he got to telling me about this. He's sore because the Davidsons have finally about decided to go in for publicity and have called the private detectives off. When I told him that an unknown young woman who had lost her identity turned up in the park here on the same day that the stripped car was found outside the city, he got tremendously excited. He's coming around to see Mrs. Winship—What's the matter, Miss Houghton?"

Emma was laughing in unaffected, unconcealed mirth.

"I'm thinking how Aunt Laura will like it if her gift of God turns out to be a girl who was running away with a married chauffeur."

Young Harrington grinned amusedly. Then he wrinkled his forehead dubiously.

"I never thought much about how your aunt's gift of God would fit into this story. She——"

"She certainly doesn't seem to fit," Emma conceded. She said it almost ruefully. "Still, isn't it likely that other strange things have happened to her mind besides the loss of her identity? Her nature may have changed temporarily. Her other self—her *real* self"—Emma emphasized the word—"may be just the sort to run away with married men."

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Winship, informed upon her return that a young woman was missing from Haverford, in the next State, whose disappearance dated from the day preceding that on which Theodora had been taken to

St. Barnabas, and that a motor car had figured in her departure from her home, was unbelieving and angry. Emma had told the tale tactfully, slurring over the elopement feature and entirely omitting the stolen securities. She had decided that it would not be "nice" in her to speak what might be calumny of their guest, and she realized how much more damningly effective all this information would be upon the lips of a Mr. Flynn or of the wronged Mr. Davidson himself. But far from ap-



"What was that?" cried Theodora's voice agonizedly. "What was it? What was it?"

precating her forbearance, Mrs. Winship was merely irritated with her.

"I want your efforts to connect Theodora with every disreputable or disastrous happening of the last year to stop!" she commanded heavily. "It's all absurd on the face of it! You describe the—the misfortune, to speak kindly—of some harum-scarum, underbred young person and ascribe it to Theodora, who, all the world can see, is incapable of anything underbred or harum-scarum. Of course"—she bent

stern brows upon the girl—"I understand you. You're jealous of her. You think that I like her too well, and you think that Walter Ebhart likes her too well. But I assure you that you don't improve your chances with either of us by your attempts to belittle her."

Emma's face was scarlet, but Emma's tongue had been schooled more successfully than her blood during the years of her dependence.

"You do me a cruel injustice, Aunt Laura," she said in a voice that achieved dignity. "But even to escape that, I can't be a party to any effort to cheat Theodora out of her own life. That's what it will amount to if we stop trying to find out who she is. You forget that she wants to be restored to her past, to herself. For her sake, I shall never stop trying!"

They were in the library before dinner when they spoke thus, and upon Emma's final phrases, Walter was ushered in. Mrs. Winship, herself a little flushed by Emma's perfectly just statement of facts, turned impetuously toward him.

"She has 'found' Theodora again!" she said contemptuously. "An abducted idiot of a girl this time—or something of that sort. I want it to stop, Walter. The girl is dear to me. She fills a place in my life. She stops the throbbing of my wound over my lost daughter. I think she has come to fill the same vacancy in your heart. Let us try to keep her with us. I—I will adopt her if that is the best way. And you—you marry her, Walter! Then she need never leave us, no matter what her past may have been. No parents, no one at all, can take a wife from her husband."

Walter was ashen. He felt Emma's unflinching gaze upon him, relentless and terrible for all its deceptive softness. Even though his eyes were turned solely toward Mrs. Winship's eager face, he was more conscious of Emma than he had ever been before in his

life, even in the days when her smooth roundness, her delicacy, her subdued color, had seemed to him such a blessed relief from the blaze of Laurette's beauty, the pride of Laurette's carriage, the imperiousness of Laurette's will. He longed to answer Mrs. Winship as she wished him to; he longed to take what she offered him, in so far as the gift was hers to offer—love and fortune. But Emma waited, too. And there waited also lifelong habit that had never yet allowed him to make a hard present choice for the sake of future good.

"I have no reason to think that Theodora cares for me," he temporized.

"Oh, if that is all!" Mrs. Winship dismissed that half-hearted objection. "She will, if she doesn't. You"—she looked at him appraisingly as he stood there, singularly handsome from the crown of his black head down every slender, lithe, strong curve to his feet—"you have the looks that appeal to women, Walter. She likes you already—at least likes you!"

"Of course," said Emma softly, as she withdrew her mild, fixed regard from Walter's face, "Theodora may have been married already. But I suppose some way could be found to fix that up—er—legally, in case she wanted to marry Walter or—any one? That is in case she doesn't turn out to be this Bessie Davidson, who eloped with her father's chauffeur after robbing her father." She used no euphemisms now in describing the heroine of young Harrington's tale, but she uttered the damning words gently, as if without venom.

And then Theodora came into the room, slim and beautiful, virginal as Diana, a silver crescent floating high above the murk of earth. She had never laughed since she had first appeared to them, but her face was irradiated now by some smiling memory of the afternoon with the sick children. Walter advanced to meet her, took her

hand, bowed low over it, and then, with a sudden impulse, graceful and unexpected, raised it to his lips. Theodora colored a little, looked at him in some surprise, and then looked quickly away. Yet Mrs. Winship, watching the scene with approval, felt that the girl had in that brief look, perhaps, seen him for the first time—had for the first time marked the fine ivory of his skin, the color of his dark-browed eyes, the subtle molding of his face and head.

"Emma," explained Mrs. Winship scornfully, "has a new discovery of you——"

"Aunt Laura," interrupted Emma firmly, "you must not make me responsible for anything in this affair. It was you, you remember, who first invited newspaper aid in trying to trace Theodora's identity. I think you were wise and right to do it. But you can't call the newspapers on and off at your own whim." Then she turned to Theodora. "We all hate the thought of losing you so," she said sweetly, "that we are in danger of playing you false, of not following up clues, of not looking—really looking. But you want to be found still, do you not?"

"Of course, of course!" cried the girl earnestly, crossing to Emma and taking her hands as if they were the kind hands of a wise sister.

And then the telephone rang, and the jubilant voice of young Harrington announced over it that Mr. Davidson would be present in Daxton the next day, to identify the unknown young woman at Mrs. Winship's. Flynn had declared it a mere waste of time to fool with photographs and descriptions!

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Davidson, of Haverford, had departed from his brief interview with Theodora and Mrs. Winship, rather relieved that the stately young woman who had come unhesitatingly forward

for his inspection was no child of his. Bessie had had her faults, to be sure, but she had never had the supreme fault of making a vulgar, irascible old sensualist of a parent feel himself unfit for her society. Mr. Davidson, in joyfully repudiating all relationship with Theodora, felt as grateful to fate for not making him sire to that piece of pure perfection as he would have felt had he been threatened with a Fra Angelico angel at his fireside and had then been let off from the too lofty companionship. And Theodora also breathed a deep sigh of relief when the interview was over.

After that experience, Mrs. Winship found it a little less difficult than before to talk to the girl about the possibility of giving up the search for her lost identity. Theodora saw that there might be painful possibilities in restoration to her former consciousness. Suppose that rather terrible old man had been her father—suppose she had been even now traveling toward the sort of home he would be likely to have—what a nightmare! Yet, if he had proved in truth her father, would she have felt in this unfilial way toward him? Indeed, if he had proved in truth her father, might she not still have failed to recognize the fact? Might not the loosened chords of her spirit still have refused to give forth an answering tone at his touch? Might it not be, as Mrs. Winship suggested, that the past was literally dead for her, and that, even if those to whom she was dear should find her, should know her, she might still fail to know them, might crucify them with blank unrecognition?

Yet when finally, early in March, she yielded to Laura Winship and to Walter Ebhart and consented to throw in her future with theirs, as daughter to the one and wife to the other, she gave way to a wild outburst of weeping, the first she had had since she had come to them. She begged their for-

givenness for what, she said, must seem to them like the blackest ingratitude, but even as she begged, she wept the more. She wept a loss of which she did not know the measure. She declared herself bowed down to them in utter thankfulness for their love, but the wings of her heart seemed to beat frantically against the closing door of a cage that shut her in from—what? Some infinite sweetness, some infinite warmth and gladness, which her new friends did not represent to her. Scarcely more tangible was her perception of that which she was foregoing than are the child's recollections of the "trailing clouds of glory" that enwrapped his spirit before it took on the life of the flesh. Yet there was an agonized sense of loss in her choice.

After the momentous decision was reached, there was some happiness in the big old house, some wretchedness, some apprehension, and presumably some resentment.

Mrs. Winship was jubilant. She had, in the first place, achieved her own will, and this had always been to her the kernel of happiness. In the second place she had, as she was perfectly aware, thwarted Emma, and for Emma she cherished a feeling compounded of hatred, contempt, and the coercion of conscience; she had, she maintained, always "done her duty" by the girl. She had saved Walter Ebhart, for whom she had a half-scornful affection—the affection of a proud, strong nature for a charming, weak, and vacillating one—from a ruinous marriage with a penniless girl; for if Emma had succeeded in capturing Walter, she told herself, the two could have starved together for all that she would have done for them! And then, finally, she found her heart reaching out humbly and adoringly toward the lovely personality that had stood upon her threshold when she had come from burying her daughter, a veritable angel of comfort, the herald

of a resurrection within her of so much that she had thought laid away in Laurette's grave.

Theodora was frightened and troubled. And these were emotions which some simple sense of right and wrong, brought over from her past, forbade her to indulge. She found herself murmuring, when each morning she awakened with that sense of loss, that foreboding of sorrow, upon her: "Be gallant, be high-hearted." She recited the dictum like a sentence learned as one learns verse, but there came to her no glimmer of how or when she had learned it. Only, in those twenty-three or four years that lay behind her, more irrevocable than the sun to a newly blinded man, some one must have made her believe that to be gallant, to be high-hearted, was a rule for life. It was a rule she found it hard to follow, though—as she told herself—she must love Walter. She was so grateful to him! She also liked to look at him. One night she found her hands kneading the air, so to speak, as if modeling that finely sensitive face, that handsome head. But when she realized what she was doing, and sought to guide her hands by her will, they fell inert, and she could not again capture the trick that had seemed so sure, so instinctive, until observed by her intelligence.

What Emma felt, Walter could only conjecture. His conjectures were miserably apprehensive. She had congratulated him without enthusiasm, but without apparent threat. And yet he felt that she did threaten him. With what? And when would she decide to take action? At what point in the game would she go to Laura Winship, puritanically severe, blazingly honest, and reveal the petty, back-stairs flirtation that had degraded the final months of his engagement to Laurette? When would she produce the handful of notes that would be the evidence against him, as a liar and a coward and a double traitor,

disloyal once to the dead girl, disloyal now to Emma?

Or would she never produce them? Would she merely live on forever with her Aunt Laura and with him and Theodora—for a condition of the new relationship was that the young married couple were to make the Winship place their home—always keeping her revelations for some future moment, when they would be more unbearable yet?

He did not know; he could not guess. And in his uncertainty was the essence of his discomfort—as probably, he acknowledged, Emma intended.

The papers of adoption were to be drawn up as soon as Mrs. Winship's lawyer returned from a trip to New York. The newspapers had been apprised of the romantic result of the mysterious case of amnesia. The date of the wedding had been set—the Tuesday after Easter, in the middle of April. Mrs. Winship was superintending Theodora's trousseau with more zest, even, than she had shown in superintending Laurette's, a six-month earlier. Emma, who was a skilled embroiderer, was at work upon linens which it was understood she intended as a gift for the bride. Everything was advancing steadily toward the outcome desired passionately by two of the actors, at least, in the little drama, when another climax was suddenly decreed.

It was mid-afternoon of a sultry, lowering day in early March. Mrs. Winship had gone downtown alone, Theodora, who was almost invariably her companion on all her trips, having been excused on the unusual plea of a headache. The girl had been splendidly well ever since she had first come to the Winship house, never showing trace of any ailment, however trivial. When Emma's pretty little nose was reddened with a cold, when Laura Winship was sneezing, and even Walter admitted a suspicion of influenza, she had been su-

perbly well. She was never tired, never slept badly, never admitted acquaintance with any physical weakness. So that her confession to a headache—confirmed, too, by an unusual pallor and a heaviness of the eyelids—caused almost as much consternation as symptoms of pneumonia in a less robust person. Mrs. Winship had been almost for giving up her expedition, but Theodora had persuaded her out of that notion. She had remained in her room after her friend had gone out, and had patiently accepted Emma's aromatic vinegars and soft-footed ministrations with the window shades and the coverlets. But she had sighed with relief when the other girl had finally withdrawn.

At four o'clock young Harrington came in. He watched Emma at her pretty feminine task of beautifying the possessions that were to be another woman's, and he talked of his office, himself, his chief, his ambitions, and now and then of his rudderless life. The monogrammed napkins had apparently turned his thoughts toward the desirability of domesticity—or perhaps it was Emma, a very figure for a fire-side, if ever there were one.

She, realizing the drift of his talk, was busier with her mind than with her needle. What should she do? Forego the rich revenge she had intended, sometime, somehow, to take upon Walter Ebhart, whose crowning moment of happiness was to be blackened by the demonstration of his cowardice and deceit, and let this young man take her away from Aunt Winship's luxuries to a simpler home?

"I suppose a girl brought up like you has never even seen the inside of one of those thirty-dollar flats," young Harrington said gloomily, and Emma was replying warily:

"Don't be silly! Don't half the young married people of one's acquaintance start in an apartment?"



"She says," he reported "that Miss Carey Vandershott died last October——"

The room darkened. A black cloud was spreading over the sky. A rumble of thunder sounded.

"We're in for the first thunderstorm," remarked Harrington. "Do you know it's been eighty-two degrees since noon? The hottest March 9th since records have been kept. And the humidity——"

Behind them, the curtains at the door were pushed aside.

"What was that?" cried Theodora's voice agonizedly. They whirled in their chairs to look at her. She stood before them in her long pale-blue dressing gown, her hair in two great ropes of bronze down her back, her little feet in pale-blue mules. "What was it? What was it?"

"Do you mean the thunder?" asked Emma, nonplused, rising, with her trained instinct, to place the girl comfortably in a big chair.

As she spoke, there was another, deeper growling of the electrically charged clouds.

"That! That! Oh, what is that?"

Theodora seemed almost beside herself with terror. She clung desperately to Emma's hands.

"Why, it's the rumbling of thunder, dear, of course."

Emma spoke protectively, but with amazement. Was this premature spring tempest the manifestation of a force that the girl had forgotten as entirely as she had her name and estate? Was the oncoming thunderstorm to her what

it might be to an infant or to a savage who had miraculously escaped experiencing it?

A sudden wild wind uprose; there was the scream of demons through the branches of the bare trees outside; doors and shutters slammed. Servants ran to close the windows, which had been opened wide to temper the unseasonable heat of the day. A furious clatter of raindrops made a noise of bullets upon the roof of the porch outside the library, threatened the glass of the windows. Theodora tried to thrust Emma aside, as if, unhampered, she could somewhere find shelter from the terrible force that was overturning the orderly procedure of the day.

And then a steel-blue flash of lightning rent the world from dome to foundation; the house shook in a clap of thunder. With a scream, the agonized girl lost consciousness.

Emma, white and terrified herself, held her unsteadily for a second, then, with Harrington's help, laid her upon a couch.

"It sounded as if we were struck," she faltered, "but I suppose we were not——"

"I'll run through the house with Gormley to make sure that no damage was done."

Harrington was pressing a bell as he spoke, and to the frightened servant who responded to his summons, he gave an order for brandy, for aromatic ammonia, for water—and then was off with Gormley toward the attic.

Emma was frightened, but the dependent's habit of composure stood her in good stead. She moistened Theodora's pale lips with the brandy; she bade the maid hold the ammonia to her nostrils; and she dampened the lovely, broad, serene brow with water. Theodora sighed, shuddered, and opened her eyes. The storm was passing; already the rumbling thunder sounded far away, the black cloud that had held all

the disturbance in its inky vapor was rushing across the heavens, and out of a cold blue sky toward the horizon an icy wind drove the heat away.

"There! You're all right now!" said Emma encouragingly. "Swallow that." She pressed a liqueur glass of brandy upon the girl, who drank it obediently, but dazedly. "It was a horrid storm, and if you had forgotten what storms were like, I don't wonder that you were frightened half to death."

Theodora raised herself higher on her elbow. She stared fixedly at Emma.

"I think," said that young woman, a trifle nervously, "that I'll send for the doctor. I'm sure you're perfectly all right, dear, but Aunt Laura would never forgive me if I left anything undone. Myra"—she addressed the servant who stood beside them with the decanter in her hand—"call up Doctor Weston——"

"Everything O. K. upstairs," announced Harrington, returning, "but the chestnut tree in the side yard is split in two almost to the root. It will have to be cut down at once. Ah, Miss Theodora, are you all right again?"

"Theodora?" said the girl. She sat erect now and passed her hand across her forehead. "Theodora? No, no, please don't speak—for a minute! Let me think! It's coming back! It's coming back!"

Harrington and Emma exchanged a glance of excitement. Gormley, with his admirable sense of the fitness of things, ordered the open-mouthed Myra from the room, and himself withdrew, out of sight if not out of earshot.

By and by Theodora raised her head. Her face was white and shining. Her blue eyes blazed. Her lips trembled as she spoke.

"Please, please," she said, "telephone to New York and find out if there is a Doctor Adrian Vandershott there. I want"—she spoke with a rigid quietude

under which they divined an almost unbearable tensiety of emotion—"I want to make sure that I'm not just—dreaming—something. I want to make sure that I'm not mad," she finished with quivering lips.

"We shan't have to telephone to New York to find out about a Doctor Vandershott," said Harrington quickly. "There'll be a New York telephone directory in telephone headquarters here."

He ran to the instrument on the table and they heard him putting quick commands and questions to the operator. The two girls watched him in fascinated silence.

"Right as a trivet," he finally said, putting his hand over the mouthpiece. "Doctor Adrian Vandershott, 208 Madison Avenue, New York. Do you want the number, Miss Theodora?"

"Is it Vanderbilt 82,000?" she whispered?

And when, after a question to the operator, he answered, "Right-o!" tears began to run down her cheeks.

"Oh, thank God, thank God!" she cried, vibrantly. "I'm not mad! I'm coming back! I'm coming back! Please get me my father——"

"Doctor Vandershott?"

She nodded yes to Harrington's question and came to stand beside him at the table. But when, after an eternity, Harrington got the New York connection and began to talk, he turned a commiserating face toward her.

"Doctor Vandershott went to France in November, they say," he reported. "It's his secretary speaking——"

"Let me have the wire!" She seized the receiver, and her voice, infinitely musical, infinitely pathetic, trembled across space: "Is that you, Miss Hester? Yes? Oh, don't you know me? It is Carey speaking—Carey Vandershott——" Then, with frozen eyes of horror, she looked at her companions: "She has screamed!" she told them. "She has screamed! She is saying——"

Oh, what is she saying?" Again she thrust the receiver toward Harrington.

He took it, listened, spoke, and finally turned grave, anxious eyes upon Theodora.

"She says," he reported, "that Miss Carey Vandershott, Doctor Adrian Vandershott's daughter, died last October——"

The girl shuddered.

"Have I gone mad?" she asked desperately. "I forgot who I was—and now I think I'm some one that I am not? But I know, I *know*!"—she threw back her shoulders, uplifted her glorious head—"I *know* I am Carey Vandershott!"

"What were the circumstances of Miss Vandershott's death?" she heard Harrington's voice, professional, unemotional, asking of that other voice, four hundred miles away. He nodded and wrote in cabalistic designs upon a pad as the voice answered. Then he took up the speech himself.

"Was there no possibility of mistake? I ask because a young woman, suffering from amnesia, was found in Lakeside Park, Daxton, Pennsylvania, on October 10 of last year. She has just seemed to recover knowledge of herself, and she claims to be Miss Carey Vandershott, daughter of Doctor Adrian Vandershott——"

"Miss Hester, Miss Hester, don't you know my voice?"

Theodora had caught the receiver from Harrington's hands and had pushed herself into his place.

Apparently there was silence at the other end of the wire for a minute. Then despair darkened the girl's face.

"She says there is no doubt of my death—of Carey Vandershott's death," she announced, dropping the instrument weakly again. Then she rallied; carmine stained her pale cheeks. She picked up the receiver again. "Miss Hester"—her voice went singing along the wires—"is Douglas Gillespie in

town? What? With Doctor Vandershott in Fr——" The color receded from cheek and brow; her very lips grew white. "Perhaps I am mad," she muttered.

"But you are not," declared Emma with sudden authority. "You are not. Other people may be, but you are not. And there's just one person who can straighten the whole thing out. That is Clifford Harrington." The young man flushed with surprise and pleasure as she turned her pretty, mild eyes upon him with conviction. "He's going to take the next train to New York with your photographs. And no one—*no one*"—she italicized the words—"is to know a thing about your—your recovery—until he comes back—with this Miss Hester! Otherwise," she warned the girl, about to protest, "they'll have you married to Walter Ebhart tonight."

"Oh," said Theodora promptly, recalling Walter for the first time, "I can't do that. I'm engaged to Doctor Gillespie."

"To bed with you, then," commanded Emma, "or you'll not be engaged to him by to-morrow! And—another thing! Mr. Harrington and the *Star* are to have the story, exclusively? You agree to that?"

Harrington added an amazed gratitude to the emotions depicted on his countenance, and Theodora agreed to "anything, anything you say, dear Emma!"

CHAPTER VII.

It was by young Mr. Harrington's masterly handling of the "Mystery of Carey Vandershott" that he won his entry into New York journalism. The story of the solving of the mystery appeared simultaneously in the Daxton *Star* and in the New York paper with which, on his trip to the metropolis, he had thoughtfully made arrangements for coincident publication.

Shorn of the picturesque touches with which he embroidered the tale and with the suspense which he artfully contrived, the history of his trip, with its clearing up of obscurities, was this:

He went from Daxton to New York and sought the office of the eminent bacteriologist, Doctor Adrian Vandershott, without even pausing to engage a room at an hotel. Miss Hester Dederick, a woman of fifty-five, Doctor Vandershott's secretary for fifteen years, was waiting, by arrangement, to receive him. She identified the photographs that he carried as apparently those of the doctor's daughter. She admitted that the voice that had spoken to her on the long-distance telephone had sounded like that of Miss Vandershott. But to both the resemblances she opposed the simple fact that Carey Vandershott, a promising young sculptor, was dead, killed in a fire that had destroyed the garage at her father's summer place, near Azalea Hill, Ohio, the previous October. Miss Dederick had not been at Azalea Hill at the time, but she was familiar with the circumstances of the tragedy and she related them to Mr. Harrington.

Azalea Hill was a small summer settlement on the shore of Lake Erie. It was, indeed, the old farm where Doctor Vandershott had been born, together with a few other old farms, renamed and rejuvenated and become country places. The doctor and his motherless daughter were accustomed to spend the autumn there every year. They were in residence at the time of the fire, although Doctor Vandershott was absent for the day, having gone to a consultation in Cleveland at the request of a colleague. Miss Vandershott's fiancé, Doctor Douglas Gillespie, was expected that afternoon from New York. He and she were to have been married at Azalea Hill late in October. Miss Vandershott was going to drive in, not to the Azalea Hill station, at

which the through trains did not stop, but to the city of Johnsport, twenty miles distant, to meet him. There was no chauffeur on the place, and only two maids in the house, the doctor and his daughter practicing, during these autumn holidays, the simple-life theories to which they both subscribed.

On this particular day, a thunder-storm had been gathering as Carey made ready to start for Doctor Gillespie. Norah, the cook, had tried to dissuade her from undertaking the run into Johnsport. But the girl, who had always had the fearlessness of abounding physical health and perfectly adjusted nerves, had laughed at the servant's advice, had prognosticated that the storm would blow over, and had gone into the garage to get out the car. No one had seen her alive again.

In ten or fifteen minutes, the storm not passing off, Norah and Ellen, the other maid, had started together on a window-closing tour of the house. Ellen was admittedly panic-stricken by electrical storms and had refused to go alone. The telephone in the hall happening to ring as they passed through, she had insisted upon waiting while Norah answered it.

Even while Norah, grumbling over the poor connection that the atmospheric disturbances had caused, had waited, struggling to understand the message, a clap and a flash had occurred together. Norah, her hand upon the electric instrument, had been shocked and stunned. Ellen had dropped beside her upon the hall floor, screaming and praying, hiding her face and counting her beads, which she always carried in such storms. Even when Norah had stirred again, Ellen, completely demoralized, had made no effort to rise.

It was not until a neighbor burst wildly into the hall, perhaps ten minutes later, that the two women had learned that the garage had been struck

by lightning and was then in flames. A barrel of gasoline, apparently at once ignited by the stroke, had exploded, and the intensity of the blaze had made it impossible for the neighbors, who had gathered from the surrounding places as quickly as possible, to enter the building to rescue any property. The wind, fortunately, being away from the house toward the lake, the dwelling itself had not been threatened. In forty minutes the ruin had been complete.

No one had at first had any fear whatever for Miss Carey. Although Norah and Ellen had not seen her take the car out, they themselves being busy on the other side of the house, they had no question whatever about her having done so. It had been, they both declared—when the one had recovered from her slight shock and the other from her panic—fully fifteen minutes after the girl had left the house that the disastrous bolt had struck. Their horror, therefore, at making out, amid the blazing ruins of the garage, the twisted steel work of a car, was mitigated by the belief that it could not possibly be Miss Carey's.

But when investigation of the embers was possible, not only were the remnants of the car discovered to be those of a Dimmer-Boston, Carey's purchase of that summer, but the fragments of two human skeletons had been found. The explanation was all too plain. Carey had not already started before the devastating stroke came. She had been, presumably, shocked or stunned by it as Norah had been, and had, therefore, been unable to make any effort to save herself from the flames that had immediately burst forth. It was also reasoned that the man whose bones were found had been a wayfarer who had sought shelter from the gathering storm, according to the country custom. The fact that Carey had not arrived at Johnsport, and that no message was ever received

from her, confirmed the obvious explanation.

All this Mr. Harrington had learned in New York from Miss Hester Dederick, and also how the two doctors who had adored the dead girl had come back to that city, stricken men, and sought work abroad, whither, indeed, the older man had been intending to go after his daughter's marriage.

The rest of the story was written after Miss Dederick had accompanied Harrington back to Daxton the very next day, and had looked with dazed eyes upon the quivering, beautiful face of the girl, who said to her in heart-breaking tones:

"Oh, Miss Hester, I am Carey Vandershott, am I not? Say that you know me!"

Miss Dederick had faltered that she did indeed know her, and Carey, flushed with happiness, had listened to the story as far as it was then written. Continually she laid restraint upon herself to prevent interruption, but when the tale was ended, she cried out, in a rain of tears and a rush of incoherent words:

"Oh, the poor things! The poor things!"

And when they looked to her for explanation, she gave it thus:

The storm had been darkening as she had fastened the curtains on her new car, and when she had maneuvered it out of the garage, there had been a



She had inchoate recollections of striving to get more speed out of her machine, of going on and on, faster and faster, through the heavy storm.

great, purple-black cloud from which rain spat in widely separated drops over the whole landscape. She had suddenly remembered chains and had gone back into the garage to get them. Coming out into the curiously lighted, threatening afternoon, she had found another car, also a Dimmer-Boxton, turning into the grounds. A man and a girl were in it—likable young persons, as Carey recalled them. They had prophesied an immediate downpour and had asked if they might have shelter in the garage. Carey had hospitably pressed them to go to the house after putting up their car, but they had said, somewhat peculiarly as she had thought at the time, that they preferred to stay in the garage. They had advised her

not to venture out on the road until the storm had spent its fury, but she had laughed, and had assured them of her entire fearlessness. She had always liked storms, she had said.

And so, leaving them in the garage, she had jumped again into her own car, and had driven off in the direction of the Johnsport road, going a little more swiftly than usual both to make up for time lost in the garage and that likely to be lost on wet country roads between Azalea Hill and Johnsport.

Soon her recollections began to grow confused. She remembered dashing through a village not far from her home before the full fury of the storm reached her. Then it had burst, and for the first time in her life she had been afraid of lightning, so sharp and blue and ceaseless had been its flashes, so heavy and continuous the detonations of the thunder. Still she had pushed on, instead of seeking shelter, having, in her new panic, the delusion that her only safety lay in reaching Douglas Gillespie.

Somewhere, she thought now, she had taken a wrong turn, but at the time she had not noticed it. She had inchoate recollections of striving to get more speed out of her machine, of going on and on, faster and faster, through the heavy storm. And then she had a culminating, last sense of terrific impact, of unbearable noise—and the next impression inscribed upon her brain was of waking in St. Barnabas' Hospital, with no recollection of how she came there or of who she was.

It was young Harrington, Flynn of the Burkertons, Doctor Thornton of St. Barnabas, and others wise in the solution of mysteries, criminal, psychic, and what-not, who built up a theory to account for all the missing arches in the edifice of Carey's tale. The alienist, who had dabbled a good deal in the theories of the psycho-analytic school, supplied the information that it was

not merely possible, but likely, that a shock, either from the awful sky or from some collision, had frightened the girl's consciousness entirely away from her; and that it did not fully return to her until somewhat similar conditions again prevailed. In the clutch of this shock, she had driven on and on, not knowing whither, forgetful of why, until she had come to the outskirts of Daxton; and there the mysterious processes of fright had impelled her to abandon her car, and she had wandered, distraught, until Policeman Shields had become an actor in the drama.

It was Flynn, young Harrington, and the Burkertons who, working on the theory that the car that had sought refuge in the Vandershott garage was that in which Bessie Davidson was eloping, eventually established the fact. When the spring rains were over, the debris of the ruined garage was examined as it had not been during the dreadful period when Carey's father had supposed he knew all its implications. And there, eventually, twisted and blackened, but not entirely melted, and with its number still visible beneath the microscope, was found the case of a watch that poor Bessie Davidson had worn.

CHAPTER VIII.

"It must have been," said Walter Ebhart to Emma Houghton on the day when they returned from placing Carey Vandershott and Miss Hester Dederick aboard a train for New York—Mrs. Winship had not accompanied them on the friendly errand—"it must have been the mystery about her that fascinated me. It must have been her—loneliness, her loneliness that aroused that delusion of—delusion of—"

He faltered. Emma's mild eyes seemed to hold an unwonted light of mockery in their depths.

"Yes?" she said sweetly.

"You know what I mean, I'm sure."

Walter rallied his forces. "Restored to herself, she was simply a vigorous, handsome, rather uninteresting young woman, without subtlety, without shading, without—er—nuance."

"I think she's a perfectly splendid, wholesome, magnificent girl." Emma spoke not in the old, gentle tone of one who ventures an opposition diffidently and in the mere hope of being contradicted. "I think she's ten times more interesting, well and strong and with that big, joyful laugh of hers, than she was as a sort of saint or something, who only smiled in a pale way. Isn't it wonderful that Doctor Thornton thinks she can have treatment that will entirely cure her of the after effects of that shock?"

"Yes, it's fine," agreed Walter perfunctorily.

He continued to look at Emma. She walked with a freer swing than of old; she held her head at an angle almost aggressive.

"Emma," he said, "don't walk so fast. Emma, I want to say something to you. You—you believe that in this late affair, I was—er—the victim of my—kindlier impulses? That I couldn't bear to hurt poor Mother Winship, who had already suffered such sorrow, and that the girl's tragic situation stirred—my—my chivalry? You believe, don't you, that you—"

"That I?" repeated Emma inquiringly, when the pause threatened to become permanent.

"That you are still to me what you were. I— Emma, will you marry me?"

"Not," said Emma, unambiguous, emphatic, "for a million dollars!"

"Oh!" said Walter Ebbart, very red.

"Not for anything on earth or in heaven!" Emma amplified her first delicate refusal of his offer. "Oh, I could thank God on my knees," she went on with a vehemence he had never before seen in her, "for opening my eyes in

time! I could thank Him on my knees, here in the street, for sending us that—that angel—to show me what you were—and what I was! Marry you? Never, never, never!"

"This is very interesting." The ugly possibilities in Walter's handsome face were suddenly apparent in a sneer. "Reformations are always interesting to the student of human nature. But I think that Mother Winship will have something to say about continuing to support the niece whose return for her kindness was to try to undermine her own daughter's happiness—"

Then he caught himself up short. After all, there were traditions about what a gentleman might say; there was a code. Emma laughed, however, indifferently.

"I don't think you can tell Aunt Laura much that she doesn't already know, or guess," she observed tranquilly. Then her face softened, brightened. Coming toward them was Clifford Harrington. "Good-by, Walter," said Emma surprisingly. "I'm going to turn back with Clifford. Perhaps I shan't see you again before we are married and leave for New York."

"So," jeered Walter, "it wasn't all the influence of 'that—that angel?'"

But she missed the gibe of his mimicry, and the face she kept upon the advancing young man was sweet, joyful, tender.

Walter did not feel like congratulating the reporter then. He departed hastily, making a pretense of catching a trolley car at the corner.

"More miracles!" he sneered to himself. "More transformations!" He pondered scornfully for a while, but gradually the ugly lines left his weak, handsome face. "Well, why not?" he asked aloud, to the astonishment and rather to the fright of the bank messenger beside him, guarding a leather valise of securities. "If a flash of lightning, why not love? Why not love?"

OUR DAILY BREAD

By Grace M. Sissons

IN our journey from country sod to city pavement, that elemental feeling of direct dependence upon nature has been dulled and blunted. This is because the things which supply our town life's daily needs pass through so many hands, so many processes, before reaching us that they appear to be born of the factory rather than of the field and forest. Even the food upon our table seems the product of tin cans and paper bags. And the city dweller, as he gulps down his breakfast in fear of a remorseless time-table, has neither leisure nor imagination to vision back beyond paper sack and baker cart and the flour mill and the food speculator to the fields of waving wheat; and seldom does he lift his eyes as he hurries downtown—it possibly might not be safe—to the clouds drifting over his crowded street. Yet these, pacing the blue fields of azure above the blind city, are the prophets of the harvest who hide in their dark mantles the fate of armies, the destinies of nations.

Our souls lose much through this forgetfulness of natural forces. For out of the race's consciousness of its dependence upon nature has come its poetry and its religion. But spiritual losses do not concern us much till we perceive the physical disasters following hard after.

Perhaps, in this hour of threatened world hunger, we may realize again the sacredness of our daily bread. The Greek, with his libations, and the Pueblo Indian, offering his sacred meal to the Sky Father, felt that nothing holier than food could be laid before the gods. And they were much nearer the truth than we who have come to regard the world's bread not as the high gift of Heaven, but as a bald thing of commerce. For food has a sacredness, a racial sacredness, deep-rooted as life itself, since upon it man depends for his life.

War has forced upon us a grim recognition of this dependence; and the business man's patriotic gardening is giving him a vision of his daily bread far transcending tin cans and paper sacks. As a result, we have demanded, as a war measure, government supervision of our food supply.

This concern over our larders must not be allowed to vanish with the emergency that aroused it. National control of this our common possession, so far as securing ample production, scientific and economical distribution, and a total prohibition of all speculation, must be made permanent. To allow either prices or distribution to be manipulated by food gamblers is a crime against the underpaid producer and the underfed consumer that, on occasions, we pay for in revolutions, which, like the rain, fall upon the just as well as the unjust. Already have food riots hinted at this form of retribution.

We cannot promise our children that wars shall cease—other nations have something to say about that—but with our knowledge of the forces of nature—and the food speculator—we should be able to promise them that no longer shall carelessness or greed be allowed to endanger that sacred thing, their daily bread.

Mr. Hatch's Best Man

By Samuel Ellsworth Kiser

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

An office love story that isn't the sort you expect—told by a skillful writer who is noted for his originality and humor.

ROScoe HATCH had a bad reputation—not for dishonesty, but for his grasping, grinding methods. His employees were underpaid and overworked. He would have won distinction as a slave driver if he had lived when slave driving was permitted.

At fifty, he had been a widower for twenty years; he was a millionaire, he was friendless, and he was in love—with his stenographer, if you please.

That wouldn't have been so bad if she had not been married—secretly—to his bookkeeper, Harley Winton. Their clandestine matrimonial affiliation had been effected some three months prior to Roscoe Hatch's discovery that Ruth Edgewood was more desirable than an increase in his profits.

Ruth sat at the side of Hatch's desk, waiting for him to begin dictating. He looked at her steadily for a moment and then said:

"You needn't take this down. I'm a business man—I've got so used to doing things in a businesslike way that I'm afraid I can't do anything in any other way. So just remember, if I'm kind of blunt, that it's because business has blunted me."

He was a stoutish man—one might say "blunt" physically as well as blunt in his manner.

Ordinarily his mouth was a thin, straight line across his face. Now, however, his lips were parted in something that was trying hard to be a smile.

"I've been thinking about you for a good while," he continued. "I've been

planning to tell you something. Being a business man, I've taken care to make sure that I wanted to say it. I guess I've been extra cautious—maybe—because there are some things a man's more liable to be a fool in than others. That's not the best way to say it, but talk's not my strong point. Well, I've made up my mind. What I was afraid to believe at first I'm sure of now."

He hesitated again, as if framing in his mind the thing that he was going to say.

Ruth went cold with apprehension. A man can't be in love with a woman and keep her from finding it out, if they come into daily contact with each other.

For weeks, Harley Winton's wife had been dreading what was about to happen and hoping that her fear was groundless. She had not given her husband any intimation of her discovery. Her first reason for keeping it from him was that she had convinced herself over and over of the absurdity of supposing that it was possible for Roscoe Hatch to care for her or for any other human being.

Another reason for concealing the truth was the certainty that if Harley knew it, he could not continue in the service of Roscoe Hatch or permit her to do so.

Harley Winton had one great fault. He was the possessor of artistic impulses. He had no passionate fondness for business or money-making. The work that he had to do he did well and

faithfully, but he got no thrill from it. He had failed to make himself indispensable, and if he had lost his job, he would not have known where to look for another.

Ruth was his second love. His first was the violin to which he had devoted himself until she came into his life. With courage, incentive, or opportunity, he might have become an artist, but such things had been denied him, and he remained merely a dilettant.

When he and Ruth had been married, they had agreed to keep their affair secret, so that she might continue as long as possible to add her salary to their income. The few hundred dollars that Harley had saved could not be regarded as sufficient protection for the rainy day; and there was Ruth's mother to be considered.

Poor Mrs. Edgewood! Her parents had given her nothing but an education that they could not afford and an idea that it was beneath her to be prepared to take care of herself if that ever should become necessary. Ruth's father, too, had been unwise enough to die without leaving an estate of sufficient importance to engage the attention of even the most covetous lawyer.

So there they were—Harley with his bookkeeper's salary, his artistic inclinations, and his belief in the divinity of his girlish wife; Ruth with her boundless love for her husband and her filial devotion; and Mrs. Edgewood, mothering the cooing doves, wholly dependent upon them, still proud of her figure, and—hopeful.

After Roscoe Hatch had waited long enough to observe the effect of his opening remarks, he asked:

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-six," Ruth answered with a little gasp.

"I'm sorry. You ought to be older. But no matter. It's nobody's business. Mother's a widow, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"How does she live?"

"We live together—that is, I——"

"M-m-m, yes. You support her. What's the matter with her?"

"Nothing, Mr. Hatch."

"How old is she?"

"I'm afraid she wouldn't like me to tell. After a woman is thirty, you know——"

She ended with a smile that was intended to deceive him into supposing that she had no suspicion of what was in his mind.

"Sickly?" he asked.

"Oh, no, not at all."

"Why are you supporting her, then?"

"You see mother was not brought up to do anything—I mean it was not necessary for her to fit herself for anything that would help her to earn money. Were there any letters you wanted me to take, Mr. Hatch?"

"No; but there's something else—Wait, please. Sit down."

"I have so much to do this morning," she replied, hoping desperately that something might happen—anything—to give her a chance to escape.

Something did happen, but it was nothing that served to diminish her embarrassment. Harley Winton entered apologetically, to inform Roscoe Hatch that the business of the preceding week had been one-half of one per cent greater than that of the corresponding week the year before.

"All right," Hatch remarked, glancing at the slip of paper that had been laid before him. "Close the door after you. I don't want to be disturbed."

Harley looked anxiously at Ruth, who made a brave pretense of being wholly untroubled.

"What do you think of that young man?" Hatch asked.

"I think he is very nice."

"Nice! Yes, that's the right word—nice. Like an apple or candy."

"I don't think you understand him,"



"All right," Hatch remarked, glancing at the slip of paper. "Close the door after you. I don't want to be disturbed."

Ruth replied with hasty resentment. Then, remembering, she added: "I mean that he seems to be earnest and—and competent."

"Just a cog in a wheel, that's all."

"But don't you think a cog in a wheel might be something more if it got the chance? I've read about so many men who became great just because they found great opportunities."

"You seem to be considerably interested in him."

"I try to be interested in everybody."

"That's right. I'm glad you are. I was asking you about your mother. What was your father's business?"

"He was a professor of Greek."

"Too bad!" Roscoe Hatch said, drumming with his fingers on the top of his desk. "Poor little girl!"

"May I be excused now, Mr. Hatch?" Ruth asked, taking a stealthy step toward the door.

"No, no. Sit down. I haven't told you what I called you in here for. I'm coming to it right away. I've made a great big discovery about myself. Have the people around here ever talked to you about me?"

"In what way do you mean, Mr. Hatch?"

"You understand what I mean, but you needn't answer. I know what they've said—or, at least, what they've thought about me, if they haven't said it. It's all come to me during the past few weeks. It's queer how a man can go on in a rut for years and years, and then suddenly some one comes along—and everything's changed. Up to a little while ago, I had just one idea, or, rather, all my ideas were about just one thing. That one thing was all I cared for and all I planned for, and I guess I've been pretty rough on others when they got between me and the thing I was after."

Ruth was almost sure that she saw moisture in his eyes. The hard lines around his mouth had softened; he had ceased to be an ogre. Really, he was rather handsome—in a gray-haired, middle-aged way. She began to feel a tender sympathy for him.

"Yes," he resumed, "I know what they've been thinking—what they've been saying about me behind my back. They haven't been working for me because they wanted to, but because they had to. There's not a person out there who would care if I should become bankrupt or die to-morrow—not one, except that they'd be sorry to lose their jobs. That's all."

"I don't believe we're as bad a lot as that, Mr. Hatch."

"I didn't mean to include you, and I don't say it's their fault—altogether. I don't think they're a bad lot. If I'd thought that, I'd have cleaned out the

place long ago. The fact is I haven't thought much about—any of those people out there." He inclined his head toward the adjoining offices. "I can see now that I should have thought about them and cared about them. There's Winton, for instance. He's been working here for a long time—ever since he was a boy—and I haven't any idea how he lives, what his ambitions are, or why he hasn't gone, like the rest of them, where he could get a few dollars a month more than I've paid him. He may be married and have a family, for all I know."

Ruth wrote some shorthand characters in the notebook that rested upon her knee. She did not dare to look Roscoe Hatch in the face.

"And there's Miss Patten. She's grown old here. Good heavens, I never thought of it before, but what could she do if she had to be turned out into the world suddenly? And how'd I get along without her? She knows almost as much about this business as I do. What have I ever done for her? Paid her a little bit of a salary—enough to live on—that's all. It's wrong!"

"Miss Patten is wonderful," Ruth declared with quick enthusiasm. "Every one here loves her. I'm so glad you realize how important she is."

"I've been wrong. My whole life for the past twenty years has been wrong. I've been alone in the world, with just one purpose. A long time ago I began to work toward that purpose. I thought it was the only thing worth while. I dropped everything else—friends, pleasures, everything. But I've been lonely! Lord, how lonely I've been—and unhappy! Dozens of times, when I've read about prominent men being dead, I've envied them. If I could just have had a few good, serious troubles, I think they'd have helped. But nothing ever happened. The business here kept growing and my profits kept increasing—faster than you

can imagine. Have you ever wondered how rich I am?"

"No, I—that is, perhaps I have sometimes."

"I used to think being rich was all I'd ever want, but I was mistaken. I found, as I got richer and richer, that it wasn't satisfying me. I got to thinking the people who worked for me were cheating me. Not by getting money that I didn't pay them, but by doing less than I was paying them to do. I hated them, probably because they hated me. That's the way things kept going on until, one day, I discovered something. I couldn't believe at first that it was true. I'd sit alone at night and think about it and argue with myself. I made up my mind that I wasn't going to be a fool."

He was looking at Ruth earnestly and eagerly, and she had become sorry for him. He was no longer the hard taskmaster, the grim, grasping, soulless man who had overworked other people and paid them grudgingly for their services. Yet she was panic-stricken. She realized that there was no escape from the thing she had been dreading.

Thoughts of Harley and her mother and their peaceful little home flashed through her mind, and above all else was the wonderful hope that recently had come to them. She had a sudden vision of all their plans in ruins, of her husband tramping the streets in search of work, of their savings spent, and of the landlord standing at their door. Though she had been gazing into her employer's eyes, the sound of his voice startled her when he began to speak again.

"Do you know why I've said all this to you?" he asked. "Do I have to tell you what it is that has made me change my ideas about everything in the world?"

"I don't know," she replied in a weak little effort to gain time; then she began to cry.

He misinterpreted her emotion. The sympathy that had crept into her expression during his explanation of the better impulses that recently had come to him had not escaped his notice.

He grasped her gently by the wrists and attempted to draw her toward him.

"Please don't!" she begged.

He released her, saying:

"I don't ask you to give me your answer now. Take your time. Talk it over with your mother. Think about it. Think what it will mean to you. Think what it will mean to her. And think what it's going to mean to me—what it means to me already. I'm not the same man I was before. I've quit being suspicious of those people out there—I don't hate them any more. I want to do something for them. Think of all that. Will you?"

"Yes, I will think of everything."

"That's right. Think of everything. I'm not going to hurry you. I'll even promise not to mention this again till you say you're ready, if you don't want me to. Do you want it that way?"

She nodded her reply.

"Very well, then. I'll wait. When the time comes, let me know."

Ruth kept at her work, without permitting the trouble she was hiding to make a noticeable change in her manner, and Hatch kept his promise to wait for his answer until she was ready to offer it.

Harley Winton was too happy to notice that anything was wrong in the world. He hummed over his work during the day, and in the evenings he improvised romantic little things as he toyed with his violin and gazed with soulful ecstasy at his wife. His gladness was undisturbed by any longing that had not been fulfilled. He never had the slightest doubt that he was the most fortunate man in the world.

Mrs. Edgewood, looking more like Ruth's elder sister than her mother, took care of the little household and



"I don't ask you to give me your answer now. Take your time."

was happy in doing so. To her, the way ahead seemed clear. She believed in Harley Winton. She was sure that he would do big things as soon as his opportunity presented itself.

Ruth alone found it difficult to bubble continuously and joyfully. It was not without effort that she concealed her misgivings, but if sometimes she did not quite succeed, her husband and her mother attributed her pensiveness to "a cause that was remote from the one which disturbed her dreams and added daily to the impossible conditions of her situation.

When she took her mother into her confidence, Mrs. Edgewood was stunned. She refused to believe it; she insisted that it was absurd and impossible; and she ended by asking pathetically what was to be done.

"First of all," Ruth explained, "I must leave there. I can't stay on after what has happened."

"No, no, of course not," her mother admitted. "If you only hadn't kept it a secret in the first place! You know I told you in the beginning that it was a mistake. I knew there would be trouble."

"Yes, I can see all that now. It was my fault. Harley wanted me to give up my work. But I thought it would be so nice to have the extra money I was earning—to save it all, you know, as we've been doing."

"Well, what's to prevent you from quitting? Harley can go on just the same, and it'll be all right."

"No, Harley can't go on just the same. Don't you see that his position there will be impossible as soon as Mr. Hatch finds out the truth?"

"But you can't keep the truth from coming out. So what's to be done?"

"First of all, I must tell Harley that he can't stay there."

"Of course. You must tell him right away, so that he can find another place to-morrow."

"If he could only find another place to-morrow," Ruth answered, with a sad little smile. "But he must try. I will go on with my work until he finds another place. He must not know everything until he's ready to go somewhere else. The chances are always poor when one is out of a job and desperate."

So they agreed that Harley was not to know the whole truth until he had found new employment.

Roscoe Hatch waited patiently, and kept his promise. Never, by a word or a sign, did he indicate to Ruth that he was disturbed by her delay in giving him her answer, nor was he ever doubtful concerning the nature of the answer he was to receive.

His experience in business caused him to regard caution as encouraging. When business propositions made by him were weighed carefully and considered at length, acceptance of them usually followed. Hasty decisions, he had found, were likely to be unfavorable. Furthermore, he was rich. He had offered Ruth an opportunity to escape from drudgery and to provide lux-

uries for her mother. All his reasoning was from the business standpoint.

He rang for his stenographer one morning, and settled back in his chair to begin dictating. After he had finished reading an important letter for the second time, he touched the button on his desk again. Ruth had been in the habit of responding promptly when she was summoned, and he was surprised at her failure to appear. His surprise was increased when another young woman from the outer office came in to inform him that Miss Edgewood was not on duty.

For an instant he was alarmed; then it occurred to him that Ruth was availing herself of her privilege as the future Mrs. Hatch to take a day off without notice. The thought was comforting and reassuring.

When he had finished dictating, he thanked the young woman who was serving in Ruth's place and asked:

"What's her number—telephone, I mean."

"Miss Edgewood's?"

"Certainly. Not the Queen of Sheba's."

A smile illuminated his countenance. He was becoming playful.

"I don't think she has a telephone," the girl replied. "I'll find out."

"Never mind. Tell Winton I want to see him."

When Harley pushed open the door of the private office, he found Roscoe Hatch walking the floor, his hands deep in his trousers pockets.

"Where does Miss Edgewood live?" Hatch inquired. "Has she a telephone? You keep track of the people here, don't you?"

"She has no telephone," Winton replied. "Her address is 952 Logan Street."

"Heh!"

After having indulged in that ejaculation, Hatch directed a curious look at his bookkeeper and asked:

"Where does young Kelcey live?"

"I will see."

"Oh, you don't remember, eh? You remember where Miss Edgewood lives, but you don't remember where young Kelcey lives!"

A dire foreboding entered Harley Winton's breast. He looked at Roscoe Hatch and wondered what awful secret he had discovered.

"Where does that young woman I sent for you—Duncan, I think her name is—where does she live?"

"I'll find out. I have a list of all our people."

"No, wait a moment. You know where Miss Edgewood lives, but you don't remember where anybody else lives. Now let me tell you something: I've been watching you."

He looked hard at Winton, who began to feel defiant. After all, he decided, the relationship existing between him and Ruth was none of Hatch's business. Before he could frame the answer he considered it his duty to make, his employer changed his manner suddenly and said:

"Sit down. I want to talk to you. Winton, how long have you been here?"

"A little over eleven years."

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do for you. You've had charge of the cash and taken care of the accounts for a long time now. I'm going to do something for you. I'm going to show you that I appreciate you."

"I've always tried to—"

"Never mind. I know what you've been doing. You've worked hard and you've done your work well. Now I'm going to give you a surprise."

He leaned forward, smiling, and tapped Harley Winton on the knee.

"But, first, I'm going to tell you something that I wish I didn't have to say to you. It's better, though, that you should know it now and get it out of your mind. I think you can guess what I mean."

His tones were deeply sympathetic. It was evident that he felt sorry for Winton and wished to be as gentle as possible in wrecking his hopes.

"Yes, I think I know," Harley acknowledged, wondering what could have caused the change in Roscoe Hatch and inclined to doubt the sincerity of his apparent kindness.

"When I asked you to give me Miss Edgewood's address, I did so just to confirm a suspicion I've had. You know a man can't hide a thing of that kind. He may think he's hiding it, but it's easy for others to see. I've known it from the first."

Harley felt his cheeks and ears burning, but he was glad Hatch was making it so easy for him. He had dreaded the time when it would become necessary to let his employer know the truth.

"I hope," he said, "that it's not going to make any difference about my—ah—standing here."

"Well, yes, it is, in a way. That's what I was going to tell you. Since things have turned out as they have, I can't help feeling that I owe you something. I'm going to give you the title of secretary and treasurer here."

"Thank you, Mr. Hatch. I'll try to deserve your confidence in me. I'm sorry I didn't tell you at the start about the matter you spoke of."

"That's all right, Winton. There was no reason why you should tell me—no reason why you should tell anybody. It was your own affair."

"Thank you for looking at it in that way. I think I can say that if it is going to make any difference in my work here, it will be for the better."

"Undoubtedly. No one could care for her without being better for it. But I haven't told you all I'm going to do for you. I'm going to give you a nice raise of pay, dating back from the first of this month."

Roscoe Hatch rested his hands on his knees and smiled benignly at the new

secretary and treasurer. Winton blinked and gave himself a little shake. He had a vague dread of waking up and being told that he must hurry to avoid being late at the office.

"Well," Hatch asked, "what have you to say to that?"

"I can't say anything," Harley answered. "Only that it's—it's providential."

"Nothing providential about it, my boy—unless she's *providential*. It's all on her account. If it hadn't been for her, it never would have happened."

"She's the most wonderful girl in the world!"

"All that, and more. I want you to do me a favor. I want you to be best man at my wedding. I'll feel better about it if you'll do that for me."

Winton saw a great light. Everything became suddenly clear to him. Roscoe Hatch was in love, and love had caused the transformation that might, he had begun to suspect, have been due to something less noble—something spirituous, rather than spiritual.

He grasped Hatch's extended hand, and the two men stood for a moment gazing silently into each other's eyes.

"I wish you all the happiness in the world," Harley Winton said.

He was so happy himself that he found it difficult to control his emotions. His first impulse was to rush



As she asked Mr. Hatch if he would "please come in," she presented an appearance that might well have challenged the attention of any widower of fifty.

home and impart the glad news to Ruth—to tell her that it was not going to be necessary for him to look any farther for the new position she had insisted he must find.

There was no possibility of keeping his good fortune to himself any longer. He divulged his wonderful secret to Miss Patten and to others in the office; but he was careful to say no word concerning the big surprise that Roscoe Hatch had in store for them. That, of course, was something their employer must be permitted to make known in his own good time.

Mr. Hatch also was so happy that he could not forego the temptation to

make others happy. He sent for Miss Patten and informed her, when she arrived, that he wished immediately to complete certain things that he had been planning for weeks to do.

"I never realized until a little while ago," he said, "how much you meant to me and to this business. You've been here longer than any one else, and, without realizing it, I've learned to depend on you. I ought to have realized it long ago, but I was blind. There's Winton, too. I've let him work away without appreciating him. But I'm going to try to make amends now. I've just appointed him secretary and treasurer here, and I've decided to double his salary."

"Oh, Mr. Hatch!" Miss Patten exclaimed. "I'm so glad to hear you say that! I'm so glad for him and for Ruth, too. What a wonderful wedding present it will be for them!"

Roscoe Hatch gazed at her as if she had spoken in some language that was strange to him.

"Hasn't he told you?" she asked.

"Hasn't he told me what?"

"That he and Miss Edgewood are married—that they've been married for months?"

At eight o'clock that evening, Roscoe Hatch reached 952 Logan Street. Upstairs in their third-floor apartment, Harley Winton, his wife, and her mother sat in solemn counsel.

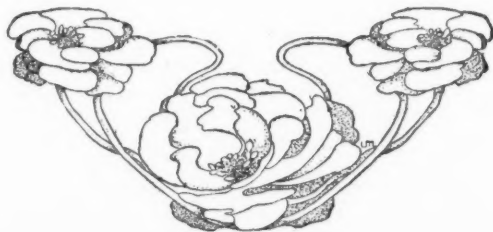
For the twentieth time, they had gone over the situation, and for the twentieth time, they had arrived at the same hopeless conclusion. When Mr. Hatch made his presence known, consternation fell upon the little family circle. Mrs. Edgewood was appointed to meet the visitor at the door, and she made a brave effort to look her best.

Fortunately she had not neglected to do her hair up in the most becoming style, nor had she failed to array herself as attractively as possible. Those were matters that she never ceased to consider important. Hope still flourished in her breast. She was always prepared for the unexpected, and as she asked Mr. Hatch if he would "please come in," she presented an appearance that might well have challenged the attention of any widower of fifty.

"I've come to congratulate you and to wish you all the happiness in the world," said Roscoe Hatch, after Ruth had introduced him formally to her mother. Then he turned to Harley Winton, laid a hand upon his shoulder, and added: "You remember the matter I spoke about to you this morning. I mean about being best man at my wedding?"

Harley could only nod.

"I just want to be sure that you're going to keep your promise. Miss Patten and I are to be married a week from to-morrow."



The Pervasive Vespasian

By Holman
F.
DAY



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

The power of push, personality, persuasiveness, and persistency, in politics and in love. One of the funniest and most entertaining of Cap'n Sproul's adventures.

BOTH Hiram Look and Cap'n Aaron Sproul fell for it, and were gratified in the bargain, for the matter was put up to them by no less a personage in county politics than Cairus Jepson, Esquire. And a fine old political hound was Mr. Jepson; with muffled paws, he could run around over an acre of whipped cream and not leave a dent.

Ticket, as per program of Cairus Jepson, Esquire:®

For representative to the legislature, Cap'n Aaron Sproul; contribution \$300 and his promise to give space for the cause in his newspaper, the *Hornet*.

For State senator from Cuxabexis County, Hiram Look; contribution \$500, the position being more important than that of representative, and Mr. Look having merely a mouth instead of a newspaper.

For member of the governor's council, Cairus Jepson, Esquire; contribution not designated. But in the game of politics, as in a going concern, good

will and the know-how are mighty valuable assets.

"There's nobody knows as much about the county political machine as I know, gents," was the assurance from Mr. Jepson. "I built the machine twenty years or more ago and have taken it apart from time to time to oil it and replace any worn parts. You are going to fit in fine! Two good wheels you'll make!"

"And we're handing over a fair amount of oil," suggested Mr. Look.

"It's to your interest to make sure there's not going to be any gears squeaking," affirmed Mr. Jepson.

He lighted one of Hiram's cigars and had a word to say about himself.

"All my life I have worked to put other men into office and have neglected myself. I'm sixty years old and am deserving of something of an honor before I die. It's my crowning ambition to be a member of the governor's council—and this year the picking of the man comes to this county; the rest of

the district will indorse the man who is picked by this county, gents. You understand, of course, that the members of the legislature from this county choose the councilor. I have your pledges, haven't I?"

"You sure have," said Hiram, and the cap'n added his word.

"With you leading off, the others will swing into line. It's all settled for the three of us—no more worry."

Then Cairus Jepson, Esquire, and Hiram Look departed from the cap'n's porch, considerably to the cap'n's secret relief. He had feared they would hang around so long that he would be obliged, for politeness' sake, to ask them to stay to dinner. And he had something special on for that day—fresh codfish heads and sounds, rushed upcountry to him by parcel post to supply a sudden hankering. He had been mentally estimating his stock while he had listened to politics, and was certain that he would go hungry if he had to divide with guests.

His wife came out to inquire if he would have the heads fried in batter or crumbs. And when he had decided on batter, she lingered a moment.

"I had a letter from Vespasian Ward this morning," she faltered.

The cap'n merely gave her a squinting side glance and showed no special interest.

"I feel that I ought to speak to you about it."

"You needn't feel called to, Louada Murilla. I ain't interested in tatting patterns, and as for these notions about shutting your eyes and letting your soul float off on a cruise by itself, your Cousin Calista is giving me all the supply I can handle."

"But Vespasian is my favorite nephew and—"

"I don't like your taste in picking favorites! I can shut my eyes and do a little soul floating on my own hook. I can see him as he looked when he

boarded with us the winter he taught school in this district—lolling around the house evenings with his purple Turkish pants and his green jacket and yaller cap, smoking cigarettes and sitting on a heap of cushions and drooling something about the mysterious—well, I don't know just what. I didn't dare to listen to him for fear I'd lose my grip and commit manslaughter."

"But you haven't seen Vespasian for a long time, Aaron. He is not so temperamental these days. He's in business and is doing beautifully."

"What business?"

"He has the whole county for the Royal Highness Sewing Machine. I have ordered one, myself. They are wonderful—"

"Just the business I would expect him to be in—lallygagging around with wimmen!"

Mrs. Sproul set her lips, for family pride pricks even the meek.

"You do get such notions and hold such grudges, Aaron! I haven't blamed you much for hating some of my relatives—they have sponged on you and cheated you. But Vespasian has grown up into a fine young man, and you'll see that he is as smart—"

"You say I'll see?" demanded the cap'n.

"He's coming to deliver my machine to-day, and I think it's only kind and fair to ask him to stay here while he canvasses the town." She spoke firmly.

"Look here! Do you know what I'm in right now?"

"I can see that you're in one of your tempers, Aaron, but my own nephew has a right—"

"I'm in politics! I'll be having political magnates calling on me at all times, probably. Do you think I'm going to have that condemned lahdy-dah of a sewing-machine sissy sitting on this porch crocheting and have to explain that he's in my family? Say, they'll

have a laugh about my house all over the county!"

"Do you refuse permission to me to entertain my favorite nephew?"

"You ought to have some regard for my reputation."

"I do have regard for it, and that's why I'm not going to have it said that a member of my family was driven away from our door, Aaron. I'm not sure when Vespasian is due, but I shall take it on myself to make him welcome. Batter, you said, I believe. Dinner will be ready very soon."

She retired into the house with dignity, and the cap'n sat and looked out across the fields with an expression that did not accord with the prospect of fresh codfish heads.

Ten minutes later, Vespasian Ward drove into the yard, his sleek horse trotting briskly. The wagon was smartly painted, the canvas covers of the machines were as white as snow, and Mr. Ward, a tall and husky young man in a neat gray suit of clothes, looked capable and businesslike; furthermore, his bronzed face was extremely attractive.

"Keep your sitting, Uncle Aaron," he called. "I know the premises and the stable. I'll take care of my own horse," and he drove along past the kitchen door, from which Mrs. Sproul hurried with her greetings.

"Take care of his own hoss!" growled the cap'n, who had not so much as uncrossed his legs. "If he ever ketches me doing my trick as his stable boy, there'll be flying fish building nests in that elm tree over yonder!"

Ten minutes later, young Mr. Ward came striding to the porch and grabbed and shook the cap'n's hand cordially.

"We haven't been near as neighborly in the past as I would have liked, Uncle Aaron. It's a particular pleasure to be here once more."

The cap'n looked the young man over and admitted to himself that this latest

edition of Vespasian Ward was a great improvement over the earlier one. Even Ward's cordiality was assertive and aroused an echo in the cap'n.

"But I've been away for some time," confided the nephew. "I saw that I was not building my character properly. I dreamed too much and my abilities were dormant. I needed scientific adjustment."

"Probably," admitted the cap'n dryly.

"Oh, yes, I did! I admit it! My ability was all there and I knew it, but the cogs of my character needed to be meshed, so to speak, in order that accomplishment might begin. Aunt Lou advanced the money so that I could go away and be trained in efficiency."

That was news to the cap'n.

"And you can see what has been made out of me. I surprise myself right along. I'm only beginning. Why, I paid the money all back to Aunt Lou inside of three months after I got to work. You see, the best part of the training is that it inspires boundless ambition. There is no limit!"

Cap'n Sproul gave a disparaging side glance at the sewing machines in the wagon.

"You mustn't think that I intend to make a life business of that, sir. A man in debt can't be efficient. I grabbed a job that would lift me out of debt quickly. I'm now keeping on with it for a time, for it's training me in the lines where I need what might be called post-graduate work." He stuck up his fingers in front of the cap'n's nose and tapped them one by one with the index finger of the other hand. "Personality, persuasiveness, persistency, and push—there you have it!" He doubled his fist. "Then grip! And you have the world by the tail, sir! I'm exercising all those qualities in the sewing-machine business, and it's a wonderful developer."

"I never could see how any particular good could come to a man from mess-



"Personality, persuasiveness, persistency, and push—there you have it!" He doubled his fist "Then grip! And you have the world by the tail, sir!"

ing around peddling stuff to wimmen," grumbled the cap'n.

"Why, my dear uncle, the work is all-embracing! First, I must get the woman interested, then convince her. Then I must tackle the man and induce him to dig down for the cash. Now you can see how that work develops my qualities on all sides. When I am ready to rise, I shall rise very rapidly. I wish you were not so old and so well settled. I would like to give you some training so as to show you how easily you can rise."

"I ain't much inclined toward this balloon business," stated Cap'n Sproul, giving young Mr. Ward a stare that might have been offensive and suggestive in the case of a person less well poised than that apostle of self-sufficiency.

"But you must have some ambition which has not been satisfied."

"None but what I can tend to all by myself," declared the cap'n, mindful of the cinch that had been assured by Cairus Jepson, Esquire.

"Still, by study of the principles of personality and the qualities associated therewith, you would be fitted to cope with other men who have perfected themselves."

"Have always got what I wanted and probably always shall," insisted Cap'n Sproul with lordly assurance.

And he was glad that his wife announced dinner at that juncture, for he was hungry and he was mighty tired of the "gab" of young Mr. Ward.

"Yes," he repeated on his way into the house, desiring to impress on this up-headed youngster the fact that Cap'n

Aaron Sproul needed no advice or help from anybody. "I have never had any trouble in getting ahead of t'other feller when I have wanted anything."

However, at dinner, Vespasian Ward got ahead of Cap'n Sproul to the extent that the healthy and hearty young chap devoured at least three-quarters of the codfish heads before the slower mastication of the cap'n could put him into the running.

The nephew helped himself from the general platter, after the first serving, genially remarking that he felt right at home and would not presume to bother his uncle.

"I'm wonderfully fond of fish," the young man confessed. "Furthermore, its phosphorus adds greatly to nerve force."

The cap'n moved his lips as if he wanted to say something at that point, but he promptly plugged his mouth with a liberal helping of mashed potato.

Young Mr. Ward exhibited celerity in all his affairs. After he had rushed his dinner down his throat, he asked to be excused from the table, lugged in the new sewing machine, promised his aunt to instruct her as to the new attachments that evening, wrote off an advertisement for the *Hornet* announcing that he would be in town till further notice and gave the copy to the cap'n, who was still eating what he had been able to salvage from the general wreck of victuals, hurried out, harnessed his horse, and drove away, whistling cheerily.

"There!" remarked Mrs. Sproul with gusto. "That's what I call a smart young man, and I'm proud that he's my nephew!"

The cap'n was pawing over the fish bones, apparently hoping to find some scraps that the new boarder had overlooked.

"I know you'll agree with me, Aaron, that all his dreams and notions are out of him these days."

"Except one," growled the cap'n, giving up search among the bones and pushing back his chair. "When it comes to fish, he seems to think he's a polar bear. Have you made him a price on board?"

"Why, he's made me a special rate on the machine," returned his wife, a flush coming to her cheeks, "and I don't believe in asking board money from one of the family. Aaron, you're never stingy. Why, in mercy's name, do you show such a feeling toward a young man who is making his way in the world?"

"Sailor instinct, I reckon," grunted her husband. "He has produced the same effect on me as a sundog following on a falling glass. If he's going to be a boarder here, Louada Murilla, you'd better see to it that your galley equipment is well moused and get out your storm racks for the dining-room table. We're heading into rough weather."

"Aaron, you don't mean to say that you'd—"

"It won't be anything that I shall do—you needn't worry about that! I know how to be shipshape and A 1 in my own home. I shall never say another word about the cutworm's appetite, not even if he butters the napkins and eats 'em. But I'm giving you a forecast that some kind of a storm is on the way, and it won't be my fault if it hits us."

After supper that evening, it did seem as if the cap'n's private weather bureau was as much askew as the national one can be on occasions. Vespasian sat down and scratched with a pen for an hour or so, piling a sheaf of manuscript on the table at his elbow. Then he placed the papers in his uncle's hands.

"Local items," he explained. "It's a great way to get news—going around as I do. I have made it a special point to keep the *Hornet* in mind."

Cap'n Sproul read the items with immense relish. It was gossipy chat about folks in town, and was fresh information that tickled his own personal interest in affairs.

"Must say you've got a nose for news," he admitted, taking off his glasses. "What do you figger is the right price for this?"

"Not a cent, sir! Not a cent!" declared Vespasian, with a decision there was no mistaking. "However, if you feel under any obligation, perhaps you'll allow me to pop in an item about myself once in a while. I can make it help in the way of advertising."

The cap'n accepted that offer with gratitude, and later on, in the sanctity of their chamber, told his delighted wife that there seemed to be considerable stuff in Vespasian, after all.

The *Hornet's* town news was arranged under the headings of districts and neighborhoods. The contents of the next issue indicated that one Vespasian Ward was the busiest man in the State. His name appeared in the items of every locality. He had addressed the pupils of the various schools in town; he had lectured at grange meetings; he had attended social gatherings; he had recited dramatic selections at entertainments. Also, his plans for future activities were announced. Foreman Foster of the *Hornet* office counted carefully and found that the Royal Highness Sewing Machine was mentioned twenty-seven times, and he asked Cap'n Sproul, proprietor, whether the items should be considered as reading ads and charged to the advertising account of Mr. Ward. The cap'n looked a bit guilty when he informed his foreman that the items were run free of charge by special arrangement.

"Then we'll do a little lying and say they're paid for," asserted Foreman Foster. "Else the other advertisers will be onto our backs."

The next week the Royal Highness Machine was mentioned forty-two times, for Mr. Vespasian Ward had extended his operations into other near-by towns and was much more active. If anywhere any of the populace was gathered for any purpose, it appeared, by the *Hornet*, that Mr. Ward was on hand. He was at three funerals and loaned the solace of his baritone voice. His sleek brown horse seemed to be a tireless creature and was well nourished on the cap'n's oats; and in spite of his dartings hither and thither, young Mr. Ward missed few meals at the cap'n's table.

When Foreman Foster mentioned to the cap'n, as a matter of statistics, that the grand total was sixty-nine references to the Royal Highness in two weeks, the cap'n scratched his ear, but made no protest. He even called Foreman Foster's attention to the fact that Mr. Ward had brought in eleven new subscribers, persons who had been influenced by nice things he had said about them in his breezy items.

Cairus Jepson, Esquire, dropped into the *Hornet* office one day with the announcement of a political rally.

"And say," he asked Cap'n Sproul, "just who and what is this Vespasian Ward? Nephew of yours, they tell me, but what's he running for? President of the United States, I should say, by the items he's getting."

"He isn't running for anything. He's selling Royal Highness——"

"Yes, I know he is. I think I have seen it mentioned—casually—once—somewhere," drawled Mr. Jepson. "But what about all this publicity for himself and these speeches? He doesn't talk sewing machine in them speeches. And, furthermore, what about this Young Men's League he is organizing in every school district for a dozen miles around here?"

"It's the 'Progressive, Personality, Push——'"



"And say, just who and what is this Vespasian Ward? Nephew of yours, they tell me, but what's he running for? President of the United States, I should say, by the items he's getting."

"I know that's what your paper says—but I reckon the push part of the scheme is to push himself into office."

"The trouble with you, Jepson," declared the cap'n with some heat, "is you've been saturated with politics so many years you can't see a man show any activity without thinking he's running for office."

"He is building up a machine," stated the old trail sniffer. "I know when a man is building up a machine. He calls his league a business-efficiency idea, but it's politics. Everything is politics—or it gets to be so in course of time. Mebbe he wants the representative nomination from this district of towns. He lives in Smyrna and he's a legitimate candidate. Mebbe he calculates he can down you. You'd better find out whether he's trying it on."

"I tell you it isn't politics. He doesn't want an office. He has never told me he wants an office."

"Have you told him you're a candidate?"

"No. He isn't interested in politics."

"You'd better tell him, so that fact will be understood in the family all pleasant," advised Mr. Jepson.

The cap'n saw nothing calling for worry.

But an idea came out of that interview.

Cap'n Sproul reflected on the matter after his mentor's departure and then he took counsel with his wife, for she had had more opportunities for intimate conversation with Vespasian.

"It's this way, Louada Murilla," he explained. "Of course it's all fixed and settled that I shall be nominated, but I'd like to be nominated unanimous. I don't suppose Vespasian knows politics from riz bread—a feller of his nature—though some old fools are bound to have it that nobody can get out among folks without running for

some office. I hate to ask him to dabble into politics, feeling as he must about straight business. But I wish you'd ask him, when the time comes right—to-night, mebbe—if he'll hand the word around and get 'em pledged up to me."

Therefore, the cap'n retired early from the supper table, giving his wife a wink.

In less than five minutes, she appeared before him, her mouth open, her eyes goggling.

"Why, Aaron, you must be mistaken about what you want to be in politics," she gasped.

He lowered his newspaper and stared at her over the top of his spectacles.

"What do you think I want to be—a hog reeve?"

"But you said——"

"I said it was all settled for me to go to the legislature from this district."

"But Vespasian says you can't have that position."

"You have gone to work, Louada Murilla, and got the thing all mixed up. He hasn't understood what you're talking about." He threw down his paper and started toward the dining room. "That's the trouble in leaving anything in politics to greenhorns! And I don't suppose he understands any more about it than you do."

The cap'n found Vespasian finishing a hot biscuit and the last of the damson preserves.

"I sent your aunt forward to h'ist a jib, and she seems to have got hold of the down-haul instead of the halyard," said the cap'n. "Of course, I don't expect either of you to understand all about——"

"I understood Aunt Lou much better than I understand you, sir."

"Don't you know plain, United States talk when you hear it? I'm a candidate for the legislature."

"So she told me."

"And I'm going to be elected."

"You can't be, sir," stated Mr. Ward calmly, and then he put up his hand when the cap'n started to protest. "Just a moment! This old-fashioned secrecy in politics is played out, and you're a victim of that system. I didn't know you were a candidate."

"I'm being handled by Cairus Jepson, Esquire."

"And that's the trouble, sir. He's been tiptoeing around for fear of waking up the people. But in these new times, the people want to be waked up. I repeat, I didn't know you were a candidate. Therefore, I have become a candidate myself, and have pledged enough votes to make my election sure. I'm sorry, Uncle Aaron—but you should have let me know before this."

"Well, I let you know now and here!" stormed the cap'n. "You fend off! You go back and tell those men you have made a mistake and that they've got to vote for *me*!" He slapped his breast.

"Impossible, Uncle Aaron! I am just beginning my career, and I shall not blast it by betraying my friends and supporters at the very start-off. That would be a fatal error for a young man."

"It will be fataler if you don't take your beak out of my dough dish!"

"Don't try on intimidation, sir! I shall report it to the voters if you do."

"You'll write a piece about it and stick it into my newspaper along with your items about yourself and that hell-fired sewing machine, I suppose! Why, you young squirt, don't you dare to tell me that you intend to run for office against me!"

"I'll not be obliged to run, uncle. I can walk and win."

The enormity of this rebellion was so incredible that Cap'n Sproul stood for some time and blinked down on Vespasian, who met his stare with perfect equanimity.

"It's no good to bluster and threaten,

sir! These are the times of the young men, anyway. You see now what my training in efficiency has done for me, and why you were wrong when you told me you didn't need anything of the sort."

The cap'n scowled at his wife and reproached her:

"Now you can see what you did when you lent him money! Handed him a club so that he could come around and bat out my brains!"

"You ought to be proud of my success, sir. The old should encourage the young to rise."

"Hump over and let you walk up my back, hey?"

"I felt that you were trying to help me when you allowed me so much space in the *Hornet*."

"I'd like to see you get your name into my paper again!"

"Oh, you can't get along without making constant mention of me. I shall be very active in town from now on. You can't leave out news."

"The only thing I'll ever print about you will be your death notice, and I'll run a picture of a crowing rooster over that! And if you ain't out of this house inside of five minutes, bag and baggage, that death notice will be run in the next issue!"

"Aaron!" pleaded his wife.

"Don't 'Aaron' me! This time, what I say goes in my family—and I hope your family will take due note!"

"Oh, I can see that it has become quite necessary for me to take up my quarters elsewhere," stated young Mr. Ward pleasantly. "Don't say a word, Aunt Lou. I pardon Uncle Aaron because he feels the sting of defeat. But I repeat, sir, that I'll be glad to take you in hand at any time and teach you the elements of efficiency. It will help you to succeed next try you make for something."

"I'm trying to keep my hands off'n you just now!" snarled the cap'n. "I'm

a good mind to take a lesson, for I'm afraid I shan't succeed!"

After Vespasian had departed, smiling indulgently as he went, Cap'n Sproul scornfully checked his wife's little speech of sympathy.

"That nephew of yours is a lunatic," he assured her. "He is so almighty in love with himself that he thinks every one else is. Folks have soft-soaped him; that's all. He can no more beat me for the legislature than a goose can chew beefsteak. Let me tell you that Cairus Jepson, Esquire, is a man who can handle politics!"

However, a few days later, Cap'n Sproul had it impressed on him that there was one kind of politics that Cairus Jepson could not handle and that kind was the new species introduced by Vespasian Ward. The cap'n's impression was authoritative, because Mr. Jepson did the impressing. The old political hound's jowls drooped despondently.

"But it ain't politics—it's gooly-wash," he lamented.

"What's that?" demanded the cap'n.

"Well, it's the only name I can think of to stick onto something that has got the surface greased so in this town that a regular politician can't stand on his feet. Gor-ram it, Sproul, he has goolywashed 'em—men, womenfolks, and infants in the cradle—till they don't care what they elect him to, so long as he's elected to something that he wants. Fence viewer, inspector of planetary systems, culler of staves, or President of the United States—it's all the same so long as it's hoorah for Vespasian Ward. And his league takes in all the young voters!"

"Do you mean to tell me that you can't handle politics——"

"It ain't politics! It's what I have said it was."

"I paid you to make me a representative."

"You mean to say that you sub-

scribed to the political fund," declared Mr. Jepson, showing the reproachful indignation of the honest patriot. "I don't promise to deliver men's votes like I would deliver potatoes."

"But it was your own talk that it was all cinched."

"Well, it was cinched, till you went to work and imported that relative of yours to knock all my plans galley-west. You can't hold me responsible for things you have done yourself—and you'll probably remember that I warned you!"

"Look here! If they ever do any more revising of the New Testament, I'm going to have your name put into a footnote under that chapter where Judas I-scarrot is shown up!" declared Cap'n Sproul with venom. "We might

as well have your pedigree straight and have it known!"

That remark gave Cairus Jepson, Esquire, an excuse for severing diplomatic relations, and he promptly did so.

Cap'n Sproul felt that he did not need to make any further autopsy on the remains of his boom. He put a notice in the *Hornet* stating that certain parties had made unauthorized use of his name as a candidate for representative, and he declared that he did not want the office, never had wanted it, would not serve if elected. He warned those certain parties to be careful how they used his name in the future.

Therefore, when, to the astonishment of all persons, Vespasian Ward withdrew his name as candidate at the very last moment in the convention and left the thing open, nobody, not even Cairus Jepson, dared to name Cap'n Aaron Sproul for the office. Somebody did rush breathlessly to the cap'n with the news that he could be nominated if he wished, but the cap'n profanely declared that he wasn't taking the leavings of Vespasian Ward.

The day after the convention, Mr. Ward appeared to the cap'n in the *Hornet* office.

"Now that there's no further chance for any hard feeling between us, Uncle Aaron——"

"There isn't any chance, hey?"

"Why, certainly not, sir. I didn't care for the nomination, after all, you didn't care for it, and Mr. Branscomb has been nominated! Why should we quarrel over what is past and gone and all settled to everybody's satisfaction?"



But once more did persuasiveness, persistency, and so forth, win out; Vespasian Ward was nominated.

Perhaps in all his life Cap'n Sproul never exercised greater self-restraint than he did at that moment. That bland declaration, after he had been scrapped, to minister, apparently, merely to Vespasian's vanity, made fury seethe in him—but he remembered his printed declaration and kept silent.

"And seeing that we shall be all friendly, I'd like to arrange to furnish items as in the past," proceeded Mr. Ward. "Here's something that's interesting."

In spite of his raging thoughts, the cap'n took the paper Mr. Ward extended; curiosity afflicts a newsmonger. In the writing, Vespasian Ward announced that at the county convention, to be held a fortnight later, he would be a candidate for State senator.

"It's this way," stated the young man, fronting the fires in the cap'n's eyes without flinching: "When I found out how easily my efficiency plan could make me a representative, I thought I might just as well aim higher—for I have secured a wide acquaintance all over the county. As to this man, Hiram Look, who made his money by showing freaks around over the country, the voters have one and all expressed their wish to have me serve instead of him, after I have explained what cheap tricks he has been up to in his life."

Cap'n Sproul, finding any kind of language inadequate, rose and hunched his shoulders and started slowly toward Vespasian with a sort of panther tread.

"If you are forgetting yourself and think you are back aboard ship once more, Uncle Aaron, you'd better think again," advised the nephew quietly. "I don't propose to allow you to chase me into the street, for that would be reported and would hurt my popularity in the county. And it would stir up quite a scandal if I were to whip you in your own office. I most certainly can do it! I'm very strong!"

The very quietness and aplomb of

the young man halted the cap'n more effectually than bluster. Even as Cairus Jepson, Esquire, had found something new in Vespasian's politics, so was the cap'n convinced that, at his time of life, he would do well to pay some heed to Vespasian's physical efficiency. Therefore, he contented himself by handing back the paper.

"I haven't time to waste on politics, politicians, lunatics, and wife's relations," he informed the young man. "Anybody belonging under any of those heads will do well to keep out from under my feet."

But Mr. Ward only smiled one of his patronizing and bland smiles when he departed. The county paper came out with his announcement and his picture and his life story. The frankness of his appeal seemed to hit popular fancy. Folks stopped the cap'n on the street to congratulate him on having such a smart nephew, and subscribers wrote in to complain because this or that affair was not properly reported and due credit given to the coöperation of Mr. Vespasian Ward. Every batch of news sent in by the *Horne's* correspondents contained something about Mr. Ward, and Cap'n Sproul insisted on having the handling of that copy in order that he might delete the name of Vespasian Ward. He swore whenever he saw it and jabbed his pen as if he were spearing a cockroach.

However, Hiram Look wished to delete Vespasian Ward corporeally.

After the despondent Jepson had confessed to Hiram that Vespasian had apparently witched the voters and had run away with the political situation, the old showman called around on the cap'n.

"You started him to going—you nussed him along in your old bladder of a newspaper—and now it's up to you to snuff him out."

Cap'n Sproul ripped his pen through another Ward item and acridly inquired

if Hiram had seen any special Ves-pasian publicity in late issues of the *Hornet*.

"No, and that's the matter! Go ahead and plaster him with mud! Accuse him of crime! Get after him! You pretend to be a friend of mine! Show that you are! You boosted him—now bust him!"

"I ain't saying but what you know your business as an elephant trainer, Mr. Look, but you seem to have cursed poor notions as a journalist. I am not running a slander sink spout and letting any Ward get me into court so that he can pick my pockets."

"But that grinning, gallivanting, gander-legged joheevus has stole my political strength away from me! Men ain't meeting me right any more! The damnation liars can't look me in the eye! You went into this thing along with me—you ought to stand by me! If you don't slam something into your paper about him, I'll get out handbills!"

"That will be just the thing that'll elect him, providing he isn't sure of the job already," stated the cap'n. "Are you losing all your judgment along with that five hundred you passed over to Cairus Jepson?"

Mr. Look grew pale as he reflected, but it was the white heat of anger.

"Nobody but thieves and murderers belong in politics!" he blurted.

"I can stand them pretty well," stated the cap'n, "but Vespasian Ward was too much for me. I got out as soon as I knew he was in politics. You'd better do the same."

But Mr. Look refused to be advised. He gathered what cohorts he could muster and stormed up to the county convention. But once more did persuasiveness, persistency, and so forth, win out; Vespasian Ward was nominated.

Mr. Look drew Cairus Jepson into conference, or rather picked up that eminent politician and lugged him into

a hotel room, where opinions might be expressed without danger of police interruption.

"Now it's no use to lay it all to me and twit me about your five hundred dollars and all such!" expostulated Mr. Jepson, after Mr. Look had used up all his words and breath. "I was operating in the usual fashion, attending to business in the regular way. But I wasn't prepared against any devilish, sky-hooting political flying machine. We haven't had 'em in this county before now. And I'm going to make a proposition to you, seeing that I got you and the cap'n in and nothing has come out. I'll own up that I haven't been able to deliver goods as promised. But revenge is worth considerable. We'll put that young whelp of a Ward down and out, where he belongs, even if I have to play traitor to my own party. The other side has a good man nominated. I know how to do sly work on the quiet. Ward thinks he is as good as elected, and he won't do any more hustling. We'll start the word among your friends to cut him at the polls. I'll tend to it!"

At that work—a strictly political job and therefore right in Mr. Jepson's line—the old politician accomplished the downfall of Vespasian Ward. Mr. Ward awoke on the morning after election and found that he had been defeated by a narrow margin—the only man on his party ticket who had lost. It was a plain case of revengeful treachery in his home camp. When the *Hornet* came out, a wood cut of a crowing rooster was inserted right over the news that Vespasian Ward had been defeated.

At the expense of Mr. Look, the cap'n and Cairus Jepson enjoyed a steak dinner, and the old showman declared that, in some respects, revenge was even sweeter than personal victory.

"It shows what I can do in the reg-

ular political line when there isn't fluking and fouling and floundering round like that greenhorn did," asserted Mr. Jepson with pride. "He has got a slam that will put him down and out in this county from now on."

"And in the meantime he has walked the cap'n with one hand and me with the other," lamented Hiram. "In all my life, I never saw a critter get mixed into so many things in a short time. But if you say that he is licked to stay licked, that helps some."

"Oh, he'll never be heard from again," promised Mr. Jepson airily. "From this time, I'll know how to tackle even political flying machines. I shall be going to the governor's council and shall be 'way up, and I'll see that you both get what's owing to you in the political way. Maybe I can handle some kind of State appointment for you, to tide over till you can run again."

"You needn't bother about *me*," said the cap'n. "I don't understand now why I ever wanted to go to the legislature. We've got laws enough."

"You might like to get through the legislature an addition to the game laws, giving a bounty for the pelts of sewing-machine agents like is paid for wild-cat scalps," suggested Mr. Jepson acridly. "You'll find a lot of support for such a law by the time the men in this county get through paying installments on those sewing machines that Ward has peddled to fool women he has buzzed with. Thank the Lord Gull, I don't have to deal with women in politics! Take a critter like Ward and he might beat even me by his looks and his lingo, if I was after a woman's vote."

The next day Mr. Jepson started forth, full of confidence, to make a canvass of the men who had been elected to the legislature—the men who would select the next member of the executive council from that district.

A few days later, Mr. Jepson trudged

into the office of the *Hornet*, his jowls hanging so low that they fairly swung as he walked. He sat down and bent gloomy gaze on Cap'n Sproul, who had raised his nose from a quest of Vespasian Ward items. They seemed to be thickly sprinkled in the correspondence that week; Mr. Ward was evidently covering a great deal of territory.

"Sickness in the family?" inquired the cap'n.

"I wish there *was*, in one family I know about—and the bubonic plague at that! Say, Sproul, do you have any idea how many Wards and Todds, all related, are scattered around this county?"

"When I first settled here and the buzzards came landing on me, I thought for a time everybody was named Todd or Ward but one man, and I heard his name was Todd Ward Brackett."

"I bragged because I was sure to be a councilor," whined Mr. Jepson.

"Yes, you seemed to be pretty sure of it."

"I bragged because I didn't have to have dealings with a woman."

"You have done a good deal of bragging along general lines in politics, Jepson," stated the cap'n severely.

"If that Vespasian Ward gets as busy in Tophet, butting into things, as he has been in this county, hell will have a new terror. Sproul, on my trip that infernal flea was just ahead of me all the way. Seven men he couldn't budge, but——"

"What do you mean? He's a candidate for something?"

"Candidate!" howled Mr. Jepson. "Is there anything that the pioogled americaneezus isn't a candidate for? Because he got defeated for the senate, he's out after the councilorship and I'll be dod-battered if he hasn't got me balancing like a tumble bug on the point of a darning needle because there's women mixed in! Are you going to sit

by and see that howlafereenus dump the whole three of us, one after the other?"

"I ain't presuming enough to grab in on the private business of a political perfesser," stated the cap'n pointedly.

"I don't need anybody to advise me about straight politics, but he isn't playing the game by rule. I say again, I've got seven men he can't budge. But I'll be devil-busted if there ain't seven other elected representatives in this county who are related to that Ward, and they have backed out on me and say they have got to stand behind the family. Dammit, I'm used to playing politics instead of planning family reunions!"

"But how about the fifteenth feller? As I understand it, that's the number of the legislative delegation from this county!"

"Yes, he's old Dickinson, up in Levant. His wife did the talking for him, and I'll be condemned if I know how to get any political sense out of a woman!"

"Do you figger he's got the inside track on you there?"

Mr. Jepson clawed at his dewlap and looked dubious.

"She didn't say anything definite, but there was one of those Royal Highness Sewing Machines in the parlor, and she kept breaking in on me to tell her daughter how nice the tucker attachment was working since Mr. Ward had explained it."

"Where was old Dickinson—bound and gagged?"

"Oh, he was there, but I couldn't get a word out of him. He only sat and rolled his thumbs and twiddled his fingers. He might have been talking the deaf-and-dumb alphabet to me, but I don't understand it well enough."

Foreman Foster interrupted them. He came in extending a sheet of manuscript, inky thumb set hard on an item.

"Says here: 'The genial and popular

Vespasian Ward, who, so a little bird tell us, will be the next councilor——'"

Cap'n Sproul grabbed the sheet, wadded it, and flung it into a corner.

"If it wasn't that so many gabbling fools come here to take to me and take my mind off'm my special business, them things wouldn't get by me," he growled. "The little birds in this county are blasted liars, if that's a fair sample of their gossip!"

"I hope so," agreed Mr. Jepson devoutly. He went on: "Look here, Cap'n Sproul. I'm coming across square with you. Old Dickinson, so I find by the records, has a six-hundred-dollar mortgage on his farm. I have five hundred dollars left in that campaign fund from you and Mr. Look."

"Have, hey?"

"But there has been no chance to spend it to good advantage, the thing running as it did after that Ward kihoot busted in," whined Mr. Jepson.

"You think there is a chance now, do you?" The cap'n's tone was rasping. "You think you're a good investment, hey?"

"There's no need of the whole three of us being flammed flat by him. If I go to the council, I can——"

"No matter about that. There's nothing you can do for me. I'm out of politics. But let me tell you this much, Jepson. I despise you, but I hate that young Ward so much more that I'll do what I know you want me to do. Hand over that five hundred."

Mr. Jepson obeyed.

"I hope you won't feel you need to take me along," he pleaded. "Being a candidate for a high office, as I am, it might sound bad if it came out that any money was passed in my hearing."

"Oh, you needn't worry," snapped the cap'n. "I'm ugly enough to go ahead and do your bribing for you. But I want you to understand distinctly, Jepson, that there's no friendship for you in this."



Vespasian waved salute to the cap'n as he and Hiram walked out of the dooryard.

"I suppose not, but I'm grateful," sighed the candidate.

He plainly wanted to say more, but Cap'n Sproul turned his back and resumed his toil with jabbing pen.

The next day, with Hiram Look going along as a willing and vengeful witness, he journeyed upcountry to Levant.

The cap'n knocked on the door of Mr. Dickinson's farmhouse, having decided to constitute himself spokesman of the expedition.

To his surprise and disgust, the door was flung open by Vespasian Ward, himself. The young man beamed radiantly on the visitors. He held a napkin in his hand and was still chewing food with the relish of a healthy appetite.

"Just in time for dinner! I'm glad

you have come, Uncle Aaron. You are welcome. And do you know what we have for dinner? Codfish heads! I brought them up myself for a treat. I've been very fond of them ever since we had them at your house. Walk right in!"

The cap'n found his voice.

"I ain't hungry!" He gave young Mr. Ward a stare which hinted that he was looking at something that had spoiled his appetite. "I want to talk with Mr. Dickinson."

"Come right into the house and talk with him, sir. He'll be glad to see you—all will be glad. This is quite a festive occasion at this house."

"I'm here on business."

"Oh, yes! I know what the business is. You need Mr. Dickinson's vote for Mr. Jepson."

"Is there any reason why he is afraid to come out here?"

"Certainly not, sir. He will come out if you are afraid to come in. I'll send him to the door."

Mr. Dickinson appeared, also with a napkin. He shook his head when the cap'n asked him to take a short stroll down into the orchard.

Cap'n Sproul pulled him out of the doorway and shut the door.

"We're here on business, Dickinson, and we can make it short. I don't propose to have you fooled. Now listen!"

"I haven't any time to listen. You're taking me away from a special dinner party where I'm needed."

He turned to leave, but the cap'n set fresh clutch on his arm.

"Then I'll make it devilish short. We need your vote, and if you'll give it to Cairus Jepson, Esquire, you'll find that mortgage cleared off your farm."

Mr. Dickinson showed neither resentment nor interest. He was a docile sort of man, anyway.

"Can't be done, nohow," he stated, with a finality that was impressive.

"But you need——"

"Yes, I need the money, but I don't believe in bribery in politics, and, furthermore, I've got to stand behind my own family."

"Your family! Good Cephas, are you a Ward or——"

"Oh, no! But my daughter, Bella, has become engaged to your nephew and we're having a party to-day to celebrate!"

"Father Dickinson," called Vespasian from within, "hurry! Your dinner is getting cold!"

"So, you see, you'll have to excuse me, gents," explained the farmer. "It's

my principle to always stand well with the wimmen folks. If you don't, there can't be much peace at home."

Framed in a window, with his arm about a mighty pretty girl, Vespasian waved salute to the cap'n as he and Hiram walked out of the dooryard.

When they were some distance down the road, Hiram suggested that they might as well divide the five hundred dollars, and they did so.

"That's a little consolation," stated the cap'n. "And the fact that Cairus Jepson, Esquire, is beat is more consolation, even if the job goes to that critter back there. For once in my life I have been walloped in A-1, shipshape, and seamanlike manner. And to show that I know it, and can take a licking as a real man ought to, I'm going to write up a nice piece for the *Hornet* about this engagement. We might as well put him on record so that he won't be around buzzing any more girls. He might decide he wants to be governor, and I'd hate to see the present one dumped out."

"It's a big asset to be young and have good looks and feel that the whole world is open and the best part of life ahead," remarked Hiram thoughtfully, and he took off his plug hat and stroked his bald spot. "That girl was a hummer for looks."

The cap'n added his indorsement.

"When that feller came shooting in on me and et my dinner away from me, he named four pretty good cards he held—push, personality, persuasiveness, and persistency, he called 'em. But I reckon that card he has just drawn back there is the clincher for the hand. What's the P to call her?"

"Peach," said Hiram.



Bobby Conron Learns a Lesson

By Elizabeth Jordan

Author of "Lovers' Knots," "John Hartley's Step Aside," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK B. TURTON

Young love at its most serious is sometimes highly amusing. Miss Jordan's clever work is known and admired wherever magazines are read.

BOBBY CONRON threw back his head, gazed up at the harvest moon posing æsthetically above him, closed his eyes, and exhaled a sigh of rapture. It was the greatest moment of his life, for the greatest question in the world had just been asked and answered. From the slight figure beside him in the hammock, the figure of the most wonderful and adorable girl in the universe, came an echo of his sigh. A small head, haloed by the moonlight, burrowed a little deeper into his left shoulder. Looking down upon it, with a swelling sense of tenderness and protection, Bobby, who was not a pious youth, experienced an odd desire to pray. For a never-to-be-forgotten moment, the sense of supreme happiness held.

"I can't believe it, Billee," he whispered at last. "I can't believe that you really love me. I'm afraid I'll wake up in a minute and find that it's only a dream."

The yellow head of Miss Wilfred Barry made another vain attempt to penetrate the excellent material of Bobby's dinner jacket.

"As if any girl could help loving you," she murmured dreamily. "But, oh, Bobby darling, you were so dreadfully slow about asking me! I thought you were never going to do it!"

"Slow! Great Scott!"

Bobby's gray eyes stretched to their widest as he stared down at her. In

his astonishment, he even moved a fraction of an inch away. Then he chuckled.

"It was exactly three weeks ago to-night that we met for the first time," he reminded her. "And now we're engaged. That's going some, it seems to me. Rather a record, I call it."

"Three weeks!" Billee's voice was almost scornful—almost, but not quite. "It didn't take *me* three weeks after we met to know we were going to be married!"

"Didn't it?" Bobby was intensely interested. "How long did it take?"

"About three hours."

"Oh." Bobby's tone was rather flat. He *felt* rather flat.

"You knew it, too, only you didn't know you knew it," explained Billee. "So I had to wait. But I didn't mind," she added magnanimously. "I knew you would find it out."

No impetuous young lover of twenty-three likes to be considered a laggard, especially when, up to that minute, he has been subconsciously picturing himself an impetuous Lochinvar, sweeping aside every obstacle to win his lady-love. The lines of Bobby's handsome mouth stiffened. Subconsciously, he remembered a certain scene in a certain play—a scene no man really enjoyed. The summer warmth of his boyish voice took on a faint suggestion of autumn.

"I don't like to have you talk that way, darling," he said. "It sounds al-



"I don't like to have you talk that way, darling," he said. "It sounds almost unfeminine. It sounds like—like Bernard Shaw and—and woman's rights."

most unfeminine. It sounds like—like Bernard Shaw and—and woman's rights."

"Bobby Conron!"

"Well, it does!"

"Bobby! Bo-ob-by!"

"Darling! Oh, my dearest darling, did I hurt your feelings? Oh, Billee, forgive me! Please, *please* don't cry! My God, what a brute I've been!"

"And you d-d-d-n't m-mean it!"

"Of course I didn't!"

"I was only t-teasing you a little."

"I know. Of course. Darling! Sweetheart! Here, let me kiss those tears away! Two of them! Two big tears, and I made you shed them! Five minutes after you said you would marry me, too! Oh, Billee, what *must* you think of me?"

Tears were in his own eyes now, and she hastened to kiss them away.

"I've made you cry, too, Bobby," she gurgled happily.

"I'm glad of it. I'll never make you shed another tear as long as I live. I'm awfully afraid I've got a quick temper, darling. I've suspected it before."

"No, you haven't, either. It was all my fault. I'm too sensitive. Mamma says so."

There was a long embrace, during which the moon considerably went behind a cloud. The shadow that fell over them drew them closer, as the passing shadow of five minutes ago had done.

"And we'll never misunderstand each other again!"

"Never!"

"And you can say anything you like to me, Bobby. It's a man's privilege, and his wife ought to be grateful to him for telling her her faults. It helps her to overcome them."

"My precious love! You haven't any faults!"

"Oh, yes, I have. I've got lots and heaps of them! But you haven't any!"

"Huh! Haven't I? Oh, mother!"

"I don't believe you have a—single—one!"

"Then you're not very observant," said Bobby, highly pleased. "Lucky for me you're not," he added comfortably.

Billee experienced a sense of natural irritation.

"Oh, I'm observant enough. I see everything," she told him coldly.

"Then you must have seen a few flaws in even my beautiful nature."

Silence.

"Haven't you?"

"We-ll."

"Which ones did you notice first? Which ones annoy you most?"

"Why—why, oh, Bobby, you haven't any—really!"

"Come on! You had them on the very tip of your tongue. Out with them!"

"I—I can't."

"Then how do you think I'm going

to improve? Who else loves me enough to tell me the truth?"

"Do you really feel that way about it? Are you sure?"

"Absolutely certain."

"Well, then. Well——"

"Yes?"

There was another long silence. The moon had come out again, and Bobby looked up at it with strained young eyes. It had changed. Everything had changed. There was a slight haze over the moon and over his young happiness.

"Oh, Bobby, I'll tell you what we'll do! We'll *each* tell the other's faults. I'll tell you one of yours, and then you tell me one of mine. Then it won't be so one-sided. And we'll be helping each other—don't you see?—to be perfect. For I'd never d-dream of doing anything you didn't like after you once spoke about it, would I?"

Bobby was silent. He was a canny youth, and not wholly without experience. The hour was perfect. Why run the risk of spoiling it by a discussion such as this? But he was very young and very curious. What *was* there about him she didn't like? He *must* know, and this seemed to be the time.

"All right," he said elegantly. "Fire away. I mean, you begin."

"Must I?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, then——"

"Yes."

"The thing I've noticed *most*—— Bobby darling, are you *sure* this will do you good?"

"You bet it will! Go on."

"Well, then, precious, the—the thing I've noticed most is that—— Oh, dearest, it hurts me to say it!"

"Great Scott, Billee, you frighten me! It must be awful! But go ahead! Get it off your chest!"

"Well," with a rush, "it's your manner with girls!"

"My—my manner with girls!"

Bobby stared at her, dazed.

"Yes. I've noticed it *often*."

"But what is it? What d'ye mean?"

"Why, it's so—so attentive. And so—so interested. You act"—Billee was in her stride now, and the arraignment came out with another rush—"you act as if you were in love with every girl you talk to! You act just as devoted as you possibly can! And the way they look at you is simply sickening!"

Concealed by the welcome darkness, Bobby's chest slowly swelled. A smile that was almost fatuous curved his lips. She was right. He was a bit of a worldling. He was glad she had told him just what she thought of him. How wise they were, he and she, to have this sane, frank, helpful talk at the very beginning of their new life! He wondered when and where she had noticed this—this way with girls. He was silent so long that Billee was troubled.

"You don't mind my telling you?" she asked timidly.

"No, darling." Bobby's voice was tender—tender and a trifle condescending. He had aged five years in five minutes. "All that belongs to my past life," he went on. "You see, darling, I can't change the habit of years in an hour. But you won't have to complain of me any more. A man leaves that sort of thing behind him when he meets the girl he's going to marry."

"And you won't even look at that cat of a Carrie Austin again?"

"Of course not, if you don't want me to!"

So it was Carrie Austin, was it? Bobby grinned and wrinkled his nose. Then he took Billee in his arms and there was a long and eloquent embrace.

"Now you tell me one of my faults," urged Billee, after this refreshing interval.

A pause—a pregnant pause, while she waited with suspended breath.

"By Jove, darling, I can't think of a single one!"

"Bobby Conron, don't tell fibs! Of course you can!"

An inspiration came to Bobby.

"We'll—since we're speaking about flirtations and one's manner toward—toward the opposite sex——" he began sedately.

"Yes?"

"You know *you* flirt like the devil—I mean—do forgive me, darling!—I mean you flirt awf'ly!"

"I don't!"

"You do! You know you do! You're better at it than any girl I ever knew!"

"I'm not!" A pleased giggle rippled through the darkness.

"You are! Why, even to-night, with that Sessions chap——"

"You and I were not engaged then. But I just knew you'd speak of it when I saw you watching us. And, anyway, Jimmy Sessions and I were only saying good-by."

"Good-by! Is he going away?"

"No, but I knew that—that later in the evening——"

"I'd propose to you? So it was your last chance with Sessions. I see!"

"I—believe—you're—angry!"

"No, I'm not. Good heavens, no, of course I'm not! How can you imagine such a thing?"

"I'll never look at Jim Sessions again. I wouldn't have to-night if you hadn't been so nice to Carrie Austin!"

"Oh!"

"Yes."

"Then that's all right."

Another long and refreshing pause. Soft perfumes came to him from her hair and from the garden, which lay before them soaked in moonlight.

"Shall we stop now, or shall we tell each other some more?"

"So you want to tell some more? Are there some more?"

"Well, there's *one* that I do think you ought to know about, Bobby darling, for the sake of our future happiness.



The next instant Bobby saw the final flutter of her white dress as she stepped over the low French window.

And, as you said yourself, no one else will tell you."

"All right, sweetheart. Go ahead."

"I'm—I'm afraid you have a jealous nature!"

"Jealous! Me?"

"Well, aren't you? Weren't you fussing about Jim Sessions only a few minutes ago?"

"I like that! How about what you said about Carrie Austin? I suppose *that* wasn't jealousy!"

"No, it wasn't. I didn't like to see you doing anything that made folks talk—that's all."

"Isn't it possible I might feel the same way about Sessions?"

"That's different."

"Oh, is it? I don't see that it is. It looks mighty like the same thing to me. But that's the way with girls. They haven't any logic."

Bobby's voice was icy now, and so was the voice that replied to him.

"If it's logic to flirt with girls and then deny it, I don't want any."

"I don't deny it."

"Oh, then you admit it?"

"I told you it wouldn't happen again. But that's not what we're talking about now, is it?"

"No," very distantly. "I believe you were telling me my faults."

"Well, you've got some," said poor Bobby, losing his temper and his head.

"You didn't see any half an hour ago."

"I've done some thinking since."

"Then perhaps you're tired of our engagement. Perhaps you want your ring again—the ring you had all ready in your pocket!"

"Great Caesar's ghost! Why do you throw that up? *Shouldn't* I have had it ready?"

"It showed that you were pretty sure of me!"

"Well, weren't you sure of me? Didn't you tell me, half an hour ago, that three hours after you met me you knew you were going to marry me?"

"I don't know now that I am. I've been doing some thinking, too!"

"Billee!"

"I—I think you're very un-unkind!"

"Billee! I didn't mean——" He threw up his hands and appealed to the night. "How the dickens did we start this?"

"And you can have your old ring back this minute if you want it!"

"Old ring! Is that the way you feel about it?"

"I couldn't be happy with a man that finds fault with me all the time!"

"Jumping Jehoshaphat! Billee, how unreasonable you are!"

"Oh, now I'm unreasonable!"

"Yes, you are! Didn't you ask me—almost *beg* me—to tell you your faults? Didn't you say it would help us when we were married if I'd do it?"

"I didn't think you were going to tear me all to pieces!"

"I didn't. I only mentioned a few of the worst——"

"A *few* of the w-worst! Bobby C-o-n-ron!"

"Didn't you say I ought to do it, and that no one else would love you enough to do it?"

"No one else would be so n-nasty!"

"I was a fool," admitted Bobby, through set teeth.

Billee's small handkerchief went to her eyes. The features buried in its folds twisted convulsively.

"I ought to have had more sense," went on Bobby harshly.

"I—I wouldn't have believed you could b-be so c-cruel!"

"I ought to have known that no man can talk sensibly to any girl. If he tries it, he gets stung every time."

"So that's what you really think of us?"

"Yes, it is."

"You've got a perfectly dreadful temper, Bobby Conron, and I'm glad I found it out in time!"

"Oh, you are!"

"Yes, I am. And you're jealous and unreasonable, and you have a low opinion of women!"

"Anything else?"

"Lots. But I haven't had time to tell you about it yet."

"Go right on. I'm listening."

"Hello, Billee." Mr. Sessions stood in the moonlight, grinning down at the pair in the hammock. "Been looking for you everywhere," he went on easily. "The crowd's going down to the foot of the garden to see a night-blooming cereus doing its little stunt. Want to come?"

"Oh, Jim, indeed I do!"

So might the castaway on a desert island have welcomed rescue after weary months of waiting. Billee literally hurled herself from the hammock. Her hand grasped Mr. Sessions' arm with a clutch of desperation.

"I thought you two had said good-

by!" was all Bobby had time to hiss into her ear as she departed. The next instant he saw the final flutter of her white dress as she stepped over the low French window that opened from the veranda to the Barrys' living room. From this heart of the big house a chorus of voices rose to welcome her. Billee was very popular. Every one loved Billee. The boy in the hammock buried his face in his hands to shut out the mocking glory of the moonlight. Almost immediately he raised it again at a touch on his arm.

"All alone, Bobby?" asked Miss Austin brilliantly.

"Yes."

Bobby's tone was curt. He tried to rise.

"Don't get up. I'll sit here with you for a moment. The others have gone into the garden."

She tucked herself into the hammock with very languid assistance from him.

"It's lovely out here, isn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose so," muttered poor Bobby.

"What's the matter? Has Billee been experimenting on you?"

"What do you mean by 'experimenting?'" Bobby's tone was so savage that the girl beside him started.

"Why—why—I only——"

"Look here, Carrie!"

"Yes."

"You're a girl."

"Yes."

"And a good pal of mine."

"Yes, Bobby."

"Being a girl, of course you understand girls."

"M-m—y-e-s."

"Don't you?"

"Do you understand every man you know?"

"Of course I do. But girls are different. No one can understand a girl, I guess," said Bobby bitterly, "except another girl."

"Poor Bobby!" Miss Austin gazed pensively into the dusky garden.

"Well, isn't that so?"

"Not exactly. But what's Billee been doing?"

"To begin with, she promised to marry me."

Miss Austin giggled.

"Hence this gloom? You're not very gallant, Bobby."

"Will you listen while I tell you about it, or won't you?" demanded Bobby savagely.

"I will."

"Well, then, here goes."

He gave her the chronicle of the hour in the hammock, while a whip-poor-will accented its tragic points by his lonely cry to the moon.

"Now what'll I do?" wailed Bobby at the finish.

"You can get her back. She'll make up. They always do," ended the authority with an unconscious sigh.

"Perhaps I can. But what worries me is this: First impressions mean a lot. Even if I get her back, Billee will always have the memory of what we said, and she'll always feel hurt about it."

Miss Austin pursed her lips. She had not come out here to talk about Billee, but she was not averse to letting the light of her superior knowledge shine over the dark path of this depressed young man.

"There's a way to prevent that," she murmured languidly.

"For God's sake, tell me what it is!"

She told him. As she did so their heads were very close together—so close that Billee, coming up the veranda steps with the attentive Mr. Sessions, turned pale in the moonlight.

"Was the night-blooming cereus doing its duty?" asked Miss Austin lightly.

Taking Billee's silence as his cue, Mr. Sessions answered.

"It's great," he said, "and the gar-

den's lovely in the moonlight. Want to see it, Carrie?"

Miss Austin decided that she did and, sternly disregarding Billee's sudden effort to detain her, swept impetuously down to the garden on Mr. Sessions' arm. Billee, hurrying toward the nearest French window, was stopped by a pair of arms that closed round her and held her tight.

"Darling!"

"Let me go!"

"Never again in this world, my beloved! I've got you, and I'll hold you till the last trump sounds!"

"I—I—shouldn't think you'd want such an imperfect girl——"

Bobby turned her round till she faced him and forced her to meet his eyes. Then, slowly, he shook his head.

"Dearest, is it possible you didn't see through that? I can't believe it."

"See—through—what?"

"Is it possible you didn't understand—a clever girl like you?"

He was drawing her back toward the hammock, and she allowed herself to be drawn, to be helped in, even to be taken again into his arms.

"I don't know what you mean," she faltered.

"Why, that it was a—a—trick on my part, 'sweetheart. I *had* to know exactly what you thought of me and what you wanted changed in me. The only way I could get you to be frank with me was to say things about you—get you stirred up a bit—get you angry. Don't you see? Then I knew you'd tell me the truth, and I could take myself in hand and knock out anything you didn't like. The plan worked, didn't it? I pretended to criticize you——"

"Pretended! Didn't you *mean* what you said?"

"Not one word of it!"

"And you don't think I am——"

"I think you're the most adorable girl in the world, and ab-so-lu-tely perfect in every respect—physically, mentally, and spiritually."

"Oh, Bobby! I've been a beast!"

"You've been an angel. You always are."

"And you don't mind what I said about you?"

"Not a bit." Bobby swallowed hard. "It's going to help me a lot, just as I said it would. I'm going to be a different chap from now on."

"Bobby darling, not *very* different, please!"

A long, long embrace.

"And, oh, Bobby, let's promise each other——"

"Here—say—hold on—*hush!*"

"I don't mean what you think. Let's promise each other never again——"

"To mention each other's faults. You bet we'll promise, and we'll keep that promise, too!"

"No mater *what* either one of us does——"

"Closed eyes and a shut mouth for the other! That's the ticket!"

"And it will be so easy. Because really, really, Bobby darling, you haven't a single fault in the world. You're exactly like the Knight Bayard, 'without fear and without reproach.' I've thought of it so often since I met you!"

"My precious, precious one! *How* can I ever make myself worthy of you, the dearest, sweetest, bravest, purest, loveliest——"

Again, at the psychological moment, the moon disappeared behind a large, thick cloud.



A Poet of the Wastebaskets

By Della Thompson Lutes

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

**A charming, tender story by a writer new to the pages of SMITH'S.
We venture to predict that she will be warmly welcomed.**

IN the year of the great fair—there has been but one—Miss Truella Vining lived in a little house at the edge of a small village in the State of New York. It was a neat little house, comfortable and inviting, in spite of its warped shingles and blistering paint. When the big house had been rebuilt and sold to pay off her father's debts, when the little, low-ceilinged ell, three rooms below and three above, had been brought down the hill and Great-grandmother Fairiday's lovely old furniture moved into it, Miss Truella had a home, but nothing to live on except a paltry hundred, with which she bought a few hens and a loom for weaving carpets.

She already had Great-grandmother Fairiday's spinning wheel and distaff, and she could use them, too. It was a matter of extreme pride with her that she could, and each year she raised a patch of flax—not more than enough for the weaving of a towel, perhaps—and each fall, for a few blissful days, she set the old spinning wheel a-whirling, her trim foot patting away at the treadle while the wheel spun the magic thread. Later, she sat upon the worn old bench to ply the dainty thread back and forth, weaving a gift for some friend who had done her a neighborly turn.

This was her pleasure through all the years after she went to live alone in the little house; almost the only pleasure she knew except what she found in ministering to her neighbors—espe-

cially after her lover went away. For, yes, Miss Truella had had a lover—as fine a lover as any girl ever had—as a lover, but not, somehow, much of a success as a man; kind and courteous and lovable, but never forehanded.

Timothy Wheaten had been a man of talents, and when we have added of literary talents, we have explained his failing. He had been able to write beautiful poetry, but in a little village there had seemed to be no particular market for poetry. So he had sold his shotgun, his fishing tackle, his fiddle—all essential adjuncts of a poetical temperament—and had gone away into the West, even as far as the great city of Chicago.

For a little while Truella had had letters. He had not found any place yet where they wanted to hire a man to write poetry exclusively, but—he was visiting the newspaper offices zealously; no doubt one would recognize his value before long. Then—it was the last letter Truella had had—he had been emptying waste-paper baskets in a newspaper office, many of their contents doubtless of his own contribution.

So Truella, each fall, gathered her flax and sang a little lonely song to the spinning of her wheel, and each winter knitted two pairs of socks and laid them away against the possibility of Timothy's return. And all the rest of the year she sold eggs and wove beautiful balls of neatly sewed rags into carpets for her neighbors. In this way,



Each fall, for a few blissful days, she set the old spinning wheel a-whirring.

for over forty years, she earned her living.

Now she was sixty-three, and in a few weeks the great fair would open in Chicago; that wonderful Chicago so far away in the distant West; that fearful city that had promised so much—that had swallowed Timothy and slain him in its coils. For Truella had long ago accepted Timothy as dead, and so thought of him on mellow autumn evenings when she sat before her loom slipping the shuttle in and out among the silver flax.

Miss Truella had never been away

from her home town in her life, but now she had an overweening desire to go to this great fair. The whole town talked of it. All the big families were going, and now and then some venturesome member of a family not so big; one of the school-teachers, for instance, and Sam Adams, the village president.

Miss Truella invited the teacher to supper one night to talk about it.

"You say you're countin' on stayin' two weeks, Miss Donnelly?" she asked, for at least the twenty-seventh time since Miss Donnelly had made her announcement. "Now, how much, at a venture, do you cal'late it's goin' to cost you for two weeks?"

"Well"—Miss Donnelly had made exact allowance to herself as many times as she had been called upon to repeat it, before daring to set her goal—"the fare's thirty-five dollars, return trip, and that doesn't include meals, but it does include a berth.

You know it takes a day and a night to get there."

Miss Truella moved uncomfortably in her old colonial chair and poured herself another cup of tea from Great-grandmother Fairiday's willow teapot.

"Don't you s'pose a body could stand it to set up?" she asked anxiously. "Ain't you nervous about gettin' into one of them foldin'-up contraptions?"

No, Miss Donnelly wasn't nervous, and it would be entirely too wearing to sit up all night. One would not be in any condition to enjoy the fair, and enjoyment was what one was going for.

"Then, there's your board——"

Miss Truella got up from the table and went to the kitchen for a fresh supply of hot biscuits.

"Yes, I figured that at ten a week."

The teacher raised her voice a little.

"Ten dollars a week?" Miss Truella came back and set the plate down sharply. "Isn't that an awful lot?"

"Well"—Miss Donnelly helped herself to another biscuit—"I don't suppose it is—for Chicago—and a fair. I didn't want to put it too low."

"Then there's your fare in——"

"Fifty cents a day." Miss Donnelly helped herself to the honey. "And I've allowed myself a dollar a day for side shows and treats and things."

Miss Truella nodded her head.

"Yes," she said, buttering a biscuit frugally, "I sh'd want to go into some of the side shows, anyway, but—a dollar a day seems a lot."

"Well, you know the money's bound to go. It always does at such places."

"Let's see." Miss Truella set her cup down, folded her hands on the edge of the old mahogany table, and leaned forward expectantly. "There's thirty-five for fare——"

"Better say forty. There's meals, you know."

"I—one could put up a lunch——"

"Still, we'd better call it forty. Forty for fare, and twenty for board——"

"Sixty."

"Fourteen times fifty for goin' in—that's——"

"You don't count Sundays, do you?"

"They say it's going to be open Sundays, and if it is, I'm going."

The teacher set her lips with devilish determination, and Miss Truella did not argue. There was a gleam in her own eyes, instead.

"That's sixty-seven." Miss Truella was keeping track.

"And fourteen for extras."

"Eighty-one."

"Well, I've laid out one hundred

dollars for this trip, and I'm going to spend every cent of it!"

"I believe," said Miss Truella slowly, "it might be done for seventy-five."

"I'd hate to chance it," said the teacher.

"I wouldn't!" Miss Truella lifted her trim white head and looked the teacher in the eye. "If I had seventy-five dollars, I'd start—the very first day."

"You would? You don't mean——" The teacher stared incredulously.

"I mean I would. If I had seventy-five dollars," Miss Truella repeated deliberately, "I'd start the very first day. And I'd stay—till it was gone."

"Do you mean to say, Miss Truella"—the young teacher was obviously amused—"that you'd like to go to the World's Fair?"

"I do," said Miss Truella gravely, and now they folded their napkins and shoved back their old colonial chairs and began carrying the dishes out into the kitchen. "I mean," said Miss Truella distinctly, "that I want to go to this World's Fair worse'n I ever wanted to go anywhere in all my life—worse'n I want to go to heaven!"

The teacher stopped midway in her course, Great-grandmother Fairday's old willow teapot in her hand; and looked at the little old lady, first in amusement, then in astonishment, for there was no smile on Miss Truella's face.

"And—and—can't you?" The teacher's voice was now quite as earnest as Miss Truella's.

Miss Truella shrugged her shoulders and then let them droop again in a dejected sort of way that belonged with her voice.

"No," she said, "I can't. How could I? I've been rakin' and scrapin' all winter—ever since I read the first account of it in the papers—and I've got just twenty dollars saved in that old

sugar bowl yonder on the sideboard. And I can't see my way to another cent."

"Maybe, before the summer's out——" The teacher's voice was anxious now.

"If I can't go to the first of it," said Miss Truella, taking down a little wooden tub and filling it with hot, sudsy water, "I don't know's I'd care about goin' at all."

"I suppose"—the teacher was drying the precious old willow ware and setting it tenderly away in the cupboard—"I suppose you could sell some of your old things. Lots of folks would——" Something in Miss Truella's calm eyes made her pause.

"I suppose," said Miss Truella, wringing the cloth and wiping out the little tub, "that I could cut off my hair and sell it. White hair brings a good price, and I've got quite a lot of it."

"Oh, but—Miss Truella! You wouldn't sell your lovely hair!"

"No, I don't think I would. It's part of me. And—somebody admired it once. But I'd cut off my hair and sell it a good deal quicker'n I'd sell any of grandmother and grandfather's old things."

The fair became, as the weeks went by, a positive obsession with Miss Truella. She read every scrap of newspaper story regarding it, every circular and pamphlet. She talked it, dreamed it, lived it. Therefore, when she reached the last and final stage of obsession and, by working day and night, had saved fifty of the coveted seventy-five and had given up in despair of saving more, when she began going from neighbor to neighbor borrowing exactly twenty-five cents from each, there was hardly more than a ripple of amused astonishment that Miss Truella should condescend to this unique way of raising the desired amount.

Miss Truella had always been proud of her ability to earn her own way,

and she did not "condescend" to borrow. She simply asked, with a little air of dignity, the favor of the loan until such time as she could get back to work. She stated boldly at the outset that she wanted to go to the fair—that she *had* to go to the fair. Something called her to the far City of White Ways and she must go.

There was no demurring about the response—indeed there was hardly a neighbor but was indebted to Miss Truella for many past favors. Three days before the opening of the fair, Miss Truella had the required sum—exactly seventy-five dollars. She had decided upon a berth as a means of conserving energy for future enjoyment, but for meals there was a well-packed box which, with a cup of coffee, she felt would be amply sustaining.

The minister called on her on the afternoon before her departure.

"It seems, Miss Truella," said he, seating himself in Great-grandfather Fairiday's old colonial chair and placing his hat carefully upon the floor, "a wild and hazardous venture. I have not approved of it from the first, but my advice was unasked and I have therefore withheld it. I feel called upon to say, however, lest some untoward accident befall you in the pitfalls of that great and wicked city, that it seems a wild and hazardous venture, a pursuing, at your time of life, of the evil spirit of carnal pleasure and the—er—the fleshpots of Egypt, as it were."

The color came deepening into Miss Truella's face.

"Elder Gainor," she said with sweet dignity, "I have not asked your advice in this matter because I have not felt that I needed it. I have never been strong on go-betweens all my life, and I have talked this matter over with my Lord."

Elder Gainor gave a little jerk and snapped his jaw. He was not used to

speaking of "my Lord" in so familiar a manner. Then he cleared his throat and pointed the tips of his fingers together.

"Miss Truella," he said heavily, "has it ever occurred to you that the world is full of raging and savage beasts seeking whom they may devour? Wolves in the clothing of men, prowling and seeking for the unprotected—the defenseless—the—"

"I wouldn't worry about that, elder," Miss Truella interrupted him comfortably. "As long as I can carry my umbrella, I don't think any ordinary man's goin' to molest me or rob me."

Having done his duty as he saw it, ineffectual though he felt the result to be, the minister rose, and with a limp shake of Miss Truella's hand, bade her a doubtful farewell.

The teacher ran in on her way from school.

"To think," she said, shaking Miss Truella's hand, "that you are really going before any of the rest of us, after all!"

The president of the village was at the train to see her off.

"Well, Miss Truella," he said, "you've got the start of us. Here's luck to you."

There were friendly and neighborly waving of hands and handkerchiefs, and Miss Truella was whisked away.

On her journey, she fell in with some country people who had been wise enough to secure their boarding places before starting and who were astonished at Miss Truella's fortitude in setting forth without. They directed her to a place near the grounds where she could get board for seven dollars a week, and on Monday morning, Miss Truella was among the first to present her ticket at the gate.

For two days she wandered blissfully about. She walked for one whole day up and down the great Midway, while barkers yelled past her, over her,

through her. She gazed transfixed at the great Ferris Wheel, gyrating slowly between earth and sky; and then, with a wild dash of valor, took a chance in its swaying seats. And she turned shocked eyes from undressed savages and half-dressed women of her own race exhibiting their charms in shameless candor before mysterious tents.

But it was not until the third day that she found the Woman's Building. Here she gloried, exulted in the handiwork of her kind. Here were the things she could do—the homely, friendly things that went to the making of a home. Here were hand-knit, hand-crocheted, hand-sewed garments, braided rugs, yes, and woven rugs. Miss Truella noted the stripings and colorings for future use. Here were quilts such as she herself had pieced, the very same patterns, and—wonder of wonders—what was this?

For all the world, it looked as if her own two little rooms had been picked up bodily and set down in this great building. Here was her own old mahogany table pushed discreetly against the wall. Here was Great-grandfather Fairiday's old colonial chair and tall clock. Here was Great-grandmother Fairiday's old bureau, with glass knobs and brass candlesticks atop. Here were the fireplace, andirons, and crane. And here—her fingers fairly tingled—were the very wheel and distaff with flax ready to spin. Here was the little loom upon which she had woven her towels, and the larger loom where rags were converted into rugs and carpets. And they were idle. Unconsciously she was pulling off her gloves when a little old lady stepped out of an inner room, a little old lady looking very thin and pale.

She took her stand before the spinning wheel and went stepping back and forth, back and forth, drawing out the slender, silver thread and winding it upon the stick at her side. It was an

old, old-fashioned spinning wheel, an older fashion than Miss Truella's, but Miss Truella remembered when her own mother had spun in the same way, and she knew she could. Then, as visitors began to crowd around, the little old lady got up and went to the loom where a piece of linen was in weaving. Dexterously, but very slowly, she plied the shuttle, and it seemed to Miss Truella that she took no joy in her work, such joy as she herself had always found in seeing grow from her own hand the thread and then the larger growth of cloth. And—the little old lady grew paler, too, and almost thinner before your eyes, and a man came often and spoke to her, at which she shook her white head and motioned him away.

Then she went to the heavier loom and banged the shuttle back and forth, weaving stripes and diamonds out of brilliantly colored rags. And after a while, when the crowd moved on with exclamations of delight over the pretty old-fashioned picture, the little old lady got up wearily, and the man came and helped her back into the inner room.

Miss Truella lingered for a while, a strange little ache of homesickness in her heart and an itching in her fingers for the accustomed and loved feeling of shuttle and thread. And as she lingered, her eyes fell upon the thin, bent figure of an old man, emptying wastepaper baskets from the booths.

On the next day, Miss Truella came early to the Woman's Building, and the first figure she saw was that of the odd old man with the bent shoulders, who seemed to be always emptying wastebaskets. Furtively he glanced at Miss Truella, and then he bent lower over his basket and hurried away.

Oddly enough, Miss Truella's thoughts drifted back into the years and to a Chicago newspaper office, and Timothy emptying its baskets, Timothy so unworthily employed. She won-

dered whereabouts in this big city that office might be—and how long Timothy had been dead—and where they had buried him—and if there was any of his poetry left about the office. Before she left, she promised herself, she would hunt up this office and Timothy's poetry. Even some of Timothy's poetry would—

And then, all at once, in the midst of her dreaming, she found herself jostled in the crowd, there was a rude wrench at her wrist, and her bag was gone. Just that very morning Miss Truella had taken her return ticket from the bag in her bosom, where it had begun to show signs of wear, and had placed it safely in the inside pocket of her bag. Ten of her remaining twenty dollars also were in the bag—and it was gone!

Miss Truella looked quickly about her. The crowd was thinning; there was no suspicious-looking person near. She went dazedly to a man in charge of a near-by booth and stated her plight. He notified another man, and between them they told Miss Truella to stay about the building and they would "see what could be done."

She wandered forlornly about, stunned, dazed, heartsick, homesick, frightened. What might happen to a lonely woman in a big city without money, without a return ticket, with all sorts of— Involuntarily, she thought of Eldër Gainor's kindly warning, and a warmer feeling toward him came into her heart. Then, all at once, she found herself before the old-fashioned room with its old-fashioned furniture, its spinning wheel, and looms. But the old lady was not there.

Instead, three men stood upon the floor talking. Miss Truella was very tired—the constant tramping and sight-seeing were beginning to tell on her—and she sat down on the edge of the platform and leaned her head against a post. She heard the voices of the



Her eye would fall on the thin, bent old man forever emptying wastebaskets, and she would feel strangely disturbed and desolate.

men, but paid no attention at first. Her eyes followed the old man who was emptying a basket from a distant booth. There was something oddly familiar about him—something that added to her homesickness. She wished she dared speak to him and tell him her trouble.

Finally she heard a word that caught her attention.

"She was too frail to undertake it," said a man's voice. "My wife is all broken up over it."

"Terribly sorry," said another, "and of course if we'd known— We saw that she was playing out yesterday, but I thought she'd come around all right—and what on earth we're going to do's more'n I know."

"Don't know of any one else?"

"Not a soul. There weren't many applied, and some of them can run one thing and some another, but none of them all, except your grandmother. There aren't many of 'em left that can manage all those old-fashioned things."

Miss Truella, lifting her head, saw him nod toward the wheel and loom.

"Too bad," murmured the other man sympathetically. "If grandma— But there's no possible chance that she'll be able to go on. My wife wouldn't let her—"

Miss Truella stood before them, to their astonishment, and lifted her head.

"Is it the looms—and the wheel—you're talking about?" she asked. "Is the old lady sick?"

The men looked at her in amazement for a second; she was such a very old-fashioned-looking little old lady herself. Then the manager spoke:

"Yes, she can't go on. And the fair's just begun, and this is one of the best exhibits on the grounds." He spoke more to the others than to her. "You don't know of any one—" turning his attention to the little old lady.

"Bless your heart!" Miss Truella was stripping off her gloves and tuck-

ing them away in her gown. "I can run those things. I've spun flax and made linen and wove rugs before you were born."

The manager's face was a mixture of relief, astonishment, delight. He opened the little gate and helped Miss Truella up.

"If you can," he said, "you've got one of the best jobs on the place. Go in there and see if you can put on her clothes."

Presently Miss Truella came forth arrayed in the stiff black silk, the dainty slippers, white stockings, and neckerchief. Her cheeks were delicately pink and her eyes shone. The men stepped back respectfully, for Miss Truella swept forth as a great musician might toward his instrument. Deftly she took up the thread where the other had left off with her weaving and went on with it—stepping rhythmically back and forth, the toe of her slipper showing delicately beneath silken skirts. Then she laid down the thread and, stepping to the linen loom, sat down and wove the silvery thread into cloth so smooth and soft that the men stood about her and exclaimed and admired. Then she went over to the heavier loom and banged the shuttle with a right good will, following the pattern already set with skill and precision.

And then she turned around, pleased, happy, and found, to her astonishment, a crowd of people about her, a regular sea of faces, all admiring, pleased as she was herself. And there was a burst of applause.

The manager was delighted and immediately offered Miss Truella twenty-five dollars a week on the spot for the entire season if she would stay. Miss Truella stayed.

All day she spun and wove and wrought wonders. And sometimes she hummed softly to herself to the accompaniment of the wheel; and sometimes—when, with her back turned, she for-

got the crowd—she would break forth into an old-fashioned song, remembering in her heart that she could not only pay off the quarters she had borrowed, but that she could make several long-despaired-of dreams come true. And she was never tired, for she was happy.

The young school-teacher came to the fair and found her. The village president came, and all of them were proud and respectful.

Only one thing troubled Miss Truella. In the main, she had had no cause to remember the good minister's advice. Men as a rule had been respectful, even deferential. One had rudely divested her of her bag—but that was a past history now, and of course there were wolves in sheep's clothing, just as the minister had said. But often in the early morning Miss Truella would catch the old man who emptied the wastebaskets watching her furtively, covertly, from behind some post or pillar. It did not alarm her so much as it troubled her. Why should he be everlastingly emptying baskets, and why, if he must empty baskets, must he so remind her of Timothy—Timothy who was dead and gone years ago?

The weeks wore away, however, and Miss Truella spun and wove and sang, and the quarters grew in numbers, and Miss Truella thought with joy of her home-going.

Now the roof could be mended. And the cottage could be painted. And she could even buy a small base-burner stove and lay in a supply of coal. This was a luxury she had long coveted. To get up on a cold winter's morning and steal out beside a softly glowing fire to dress—she thought of it with a little feeling of luxury that lifted her head. Besides, what a comfortable and happy sleep would a cushion and rug beside this same genial warmth afford to Betsy, the yellow cat, and to Peter, the shepherd dog! The thought of these

two faithful and devoted members of her too-lean family brought an added glow to Miss Truella's heart, and she beat a little impatiently upon the looms during the last few days, hurrying the hour that would take her to them.

One task remained, however, after the last throw of the shuttle had been made, the last whirl of the wheel, the last dip of the distaff. The spirit of Timothy had never been far from Miss Truella since her first entrance into this great city which had so ruthlessly sapped the fervor of life from his poetic young soul.

Miss Truella even wondered, in some of her homesick moments, if Timothy were not there in spirit, watching over and guarding her. Then her eye would fall, perhaps, on the thin, bent old man forever emptying wastebaskets, and she would feel strangely disturbed and desolate.

But the old man never in all the summer came near enough to speak to her or let her speak to him, nor did he lift his eyes to meet hers, though many and many a time, turning quickly from her loom, she would catch his face lifted toward her under the shadow of his flapping old straw hat. And always there was a terrible, haunting sadness about the chin and mouth, an overwhelming longing, a suggestion of memories. Miss Truella wondered if he wasn't dreadfully homesick; perhaps she reminded him of his folks somewhere back in the country. She wished he wouldn't always empty the basket of their booth after she was gone.

The last day of the fair came. The men who were exhibiting the booth where Miss Truella had spun away the long summer days came and said warm and friendly good-bys. They had grown to love the kindly, sweet little old lady.

Then Miss Truella turned her back on the already dismantled booth, gave

a lingering look around the building, hoping to see the old man of the wastebaskets, fancied that a flapping hat brim ventured, tremulously, from a distant pillar, and set forth. She was not yet quite ready to go home. There was the errand to the mad commotion of the city's center, and this was the hour. It was yet early morning and she would not leave until the next day.

Timothy had worked in a newspaper office, and Miss Truella was going to all the newspaper offices to see if she could find out when he had died, where he was buried, and if any of his poetry were left about the office. If there was, she would pay them for it and take it away.

Miss Truella dreaded this downtown journey. Through all the five months of her stay, she had not ventured to step aside from the path that led from her boarding house to the gate of the fair grounds. The Midway had proven sufficiently exciting for her.

Just before she reached her room, she remembered that a young man who boarded in the same house with her worked in a newspaper office and went on duty about noon. He was an exceedingly pleasant young man, and she had asked him once if he had ever heard of one Timothy Wheaten, who also had worked in a newspaper office—and who had written poetry—but he had not.

She hurried along now, determined to ask the young man to show her the way to the street where the newspapers were printed. She did not doubt but that there would be three or four.

Mr. Robinson was eating his breakfast. Miss Truella went directly to him and made her request.

Mr. Robinson was gracious. He scented a story.

"Why, certainly, Miss Truella." Every one called her Miss Truella here, just as they did at home. "Have you any idea what office he worked in?"

Miss Truella had not. Timothy had never mentioned the name of the office that would some day doubtless employ him upon its staff of poets.

Mr. Robinson looked slightly perplexed, thought a few moments, looked at Miss Truella's earnest, artless face, and asked:

"How long ago was it?"

When Miss Truella replied, "Forty-four years ago," in a tone that trembled, the young reporter looked at her again, startled. Then his nose went up, in the air, like a pointer's, and he said:

"The only thing we can do, then, Miss Truella, is to visit all the offices until we find the right one. And I'll be very glad to go with you."

Miss Truella gave a sigh of content and relief, straightened her old-fashioned hat—she could have a new one for winter—and they set forth.

It was eleven o'clock when they started. The offices were not as close together as Miss Truella had thought they would be; the noise bewildered her; the traffic frightened her. At three o'clock, they had visited five offices and no trace of Timothy Wheaten had they found. It was not an easy thing to get at superintendents and at wage rolls of forty-four years back, even with a wide-awake, prominent young reporter to use influence and tact, and it took time. At three o'clock, also, Miss Truella began to grow white and limp and wistful. And as the sweet old mouth began to droop and the lined cheeks to pale, the young reporter lost some of his interest in the story he was hunting, but none in the little figure trudging so patiently upstairs and downstairs at his side.

Then it struck him that she might be hungry, and he asked her.

"Just a mite," she admitted. "If I could get just a cup of tea. I had my breakfast about six o'clock."

"Great heavens!"

The story began to ooze off into the

distance, and the young reporter kicked himself for a thoughtless ass. He took her into a restaurant and gorged her. Then, heartened, they went on their way. Four more offices they visited, and at the fourth it was closing hour and Miss Truella was quite discouraged.

"No use," she said, patiently disconsolate. "Probably they didn't keep account of him. I guess we'll go back now. You've given up your whole day, and I'm mighty sorry."

But the young man was made of that kind of stuff which turns out good newspapers. Balked, he was determined. Besides, he knew the superintendent here very well. He caught him, introduced Miss Truella, and stated their errand. The superintendent was new to the place—it was his first month—but he looked at Miss Truella's drooping, tired figure, the pathetic mouth and lonely, earnest eyes, and turned back with them to the offices.

Ledger after ledger they ran over on the musty, dusty shelves, and finally they came to that of the year—1849. The young reporter ran his finger down page after page, and at last the finger paused.

"Here it is!" he shouted, and over his shoulder the superintendent peered excitedly, and around his arm Miss Truella peered excitedly, while two or three men still bending over their work looked up in sudden astonishment.

Then they followed the trail. The ledger of 1850 still carried the name of Timothy Wheaten. 1851 did the same. So did '52; so did '53; so did '54. They began to search feverishly—'55—'56—'57. Then they skipped two or three years and jumped into the '60's. Still Timothy Wheaten's name went on, always at the same wage, always at the same job, a sort of a cross between devil, janitor, and errand boy.

They made few comments, the superintendent and the young reporter, but

they took down ledger after ledger, and it was always the same—Timothy Wheaten, ten dollars per week. In the '80's, he was still there.

"Gee!" exclaimed the young reporter. "Ten years ago! I thought you said he died."

He turned upon Miss Truella, seated now on a bookkeeper's high stool, hands upon knees and leaning forward, intent, eager, wide-eyed.

"I—I thought he did," she stammered, her bewildered gaze meeting his. "I thought he must 'a'. He said he'd come back—when he'd made money enough."

"Huh!" grunted the superintendent.

Then they went on looking.

"Well, for Mike's sake!" The exclamation came from the superintendent. You'd have thought it was at least a long-lost uncle in whose search he was taking part, so eager was his eye, so great his excitement. "Look-a-here!"

They looked. It was the ledger of 1893. On May 1st, was this entry: "Resigned—forty-four years' service. Work on World's Fair grounds. Can come back any time."

The young reporter stared at the superintendent, and the superintendent's mouth hung open as he stared back at the young reporter.

"And the grounds closed to-day," said the young reporter dully.

Then they both turned and stared at Miss Truella. She was slipping down off the high stool and straightening her hat, and she was whispering something to herself:

"It was! It was! It was!"

That was all she was saying, and they thought the disappointments of the day and its final excitement had been too much for her.

Tenderly the superintendent said good night, and tenderly the young reporter put her on a car and took her home. And all the way she never spoke



"I knew you, Elly," he said, and his voice shook with what was not age, "all the time. And how I wanted—"

a word, but there was a faint little glow on her cheeks and a queer little glow in her eyes that the young reporter could not understand.

He wondered how he could make his story end. The grounds were closed, the help laid off; there would be no way of finding an unknown old man now, in this great haystack of a city. But Miss Truella's lips moved softly and tremulously, almost smiling.

Arrived at home, Miss Truella bade the young reporter a courteous good

night and thanked him graciously for the day he had given her, but she was a strange little Miss Truella, seemingly not wearied now, or disconsolate. She asked the young reporter, if he should ever be in the vicinity of Newark, New York, to be sure to "come and see us."

Early the next morning, *very early*, before the first workman had appeared on the grounds, Miss Truella was there. The booth where she had spun and woven and hummed her sweet old-fashioned tunes was torn down, but there was a pile of lumber there, and she sat down to wait.

Pretty soon he came. Thinner, more stooped, more forlorn, he looked, than ever, and the everlasting wastebasket was in his hands. His hat was not pulled down over his face now, and Miss Truella's heart gave a great leap as she looked full upon his face before he saw her. It was still the face of a poet.

Suddenly stepping out from a pillar near her, he looked up and met her eyes. The basket dropped from his hands. He straightened and stiffened. Caught, he

would not run, and now Miss Truella's heart swelled. Timothy was a poet—and a man! She got up uncertainly, trembling a little, blinded a little by a mist in her eyes, and went toward him, hands out.

"Timmy!" she whispered. "Timmy!"

She put both hands tightly about his arm and sobbed—not loudly, but short and brokenly, as people of years do.

"I knew you, Elly," he said, and his voice shook with what was not age, "all the time. And how I wanted—"

"Why didn't you, Timmy? Why in the world didn't you?"

"I couldn't, Elly. There was you gettin' twenty-five a week, and me twelve. I never got but ten before, Elly, in all these years."

"I know it, Timmy; I know it. As if *that* made any difference! Come over here and sit down. My knees shake!" They went to the pile of lumber and sat down. "Why didn't you ever write, Timmy? Or come back?"

She still clung to his arm, and his hand, his great, wastebasket-roughened hand, smoothed hers.

"I couldn't, Elly. I never made anything of myself. Nobody wanted poetry and I seemed to lack—gumption. I lit out of there—four times, and tried to get other jobs, but some way—I couldn't hold 'em. I always drifted back to wastebaskets. Seemed as if I belonged in a wastebasket myself. So I stayed."

"Oh, Timmy! And I've been so lonesome!"

"So've I, Elly."

"Course you have, you poor boy!"

She lifted adoring eyes to the thin, ill-nourished, lined old face. She lifted a small plump hand and smoothed the wrinkles by his mouth.

"Timmy," she said, suddenly sitting erect and squaring toward him, "I'm goin' back home this morning."

"Yes—Elly." The old man grew older before her eyes, thinner, paler. The lines around his mouth deepened into furrows.

"The train goes at ten-forty-five. I'm all ready. And—Timothy Wheaten, you're goin' with me!" She pursed the lines of her mouth into narrow threads and looked at him through slits in her eyelids.

The old man lifted his head and stared at her. His eyes grew wild and a faint color crept into his cheeks.

"Wha—wha'd you say, Elly?" he stammered.

"I said—you're goin' home with me! I've been waitin' for you and knittin' socks for you for past forty years. I'd given up all hopes of ever seein' you, but now I've found you, I'm not goin' to let you out o' my sight again. I'm countin' on mendin' the roof——"

"I could do that, Elly."

"And paintin' the house——"

"I'm good at paintin', Elly."

"And the fences need fixin' up——"

"I love to fix fences, Elly."

"And the garden! Why, that garden's a sight, with weeds——"

"Elly, I've hankered for a garden!"

"And we can raise hens."

"Elly, I never saved enough so I had the nerve to come home, but I got enough to buy a cow."

"A *cow*! Why, Timothy Wheaten, all my life long I've wanted a cow! But I couldn't take care of her. And —a *Jersey*! We can sell milk——"

"Elly, can I—pay my way?"

"Timothy Wheaten—can I?"

He looked down at her from under his old straw hat, and an echo of his youth came flinging its spell upon him. He kissed her.

An hour later, the young reporter, eating an early breakfast to make up for the day before, was startled by the vision of two elderly and youthful people before him.

"Mr. Robinson," said Miss Truella, with dignity, "will you do one more favor for—us?"

"Will I?"

Mr. Robinson jumped up, and grabbed a hand of each.

"Will you go out with Mr. Wheaten, help him to buy a—proper suit of clothes, and then will you——"

"Will you"—Mr. Wheaten took up the story and his head was very high—"will you go with me to find a minister who will come here and marry us so we can catch the ten-fifteen train?"

"Will I!" shouted the young reporter.

"Will I!"

The Petticoat Girl

By Marion Short

Author of "Hallie Nobody," "Just to Say Good-by," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY V. SANDBERG

The story of a Man, a Girl, and a Petticoat, and why Another Man became a Woman Hater.

IS this the lamp shade you were looking for?"

Mrs. Thorpe handed Nancy a partly opened bundle from the storage trunk.

"Whether it is or isn't," answered her niece, in sharp staccato accents entirely unlike her usual soft contralto, "it's the last string I break to-day!"

For six hours of steady work in trying to make a rented summer cottage in the Adirondacks look like a real home had played havoc with both Nancy's nerves and beauty. Her fresh mull collar had grown limp; her chin was smudged with dust; and a crinkle of yellow hair which had broken from its moorings bobbed jerkily over one eye.

After a horrified glance at the contents of the bundle, she sank back on her heels.

"Why, what a pretty petticoat!" admired Mrs. Thorpe, possessing herself of the garment and holding it out at arm's length. "Did you buy it to wear with your new pink evening gown?"

Vehemently Nancy shook her head, and a second truant lock escaped to join the first.

"I didn't buy it at all. It isn't mine—now. I meant to send it back to Theodore Ashley, along with his other engagement presents."

"But, Nancy!" gasped Mrs. Thorpe. "Surely Theodore Ashley didn't give you a petticoat!"

Nancy nodded.

"Oh, yes, he did. Because he won it at a church raffle and didn't know what to do with it and was too economical to have it wasted. Besides, it saved him his usual box of candy." She dimpled roguishly for a moment; then frowned in severe self-reproach. "Aunt Isabel, I don't want you to think I'm making fun of Theodore. That would be simply criminal on my part. He was the incarnation of goodness, and economy was just one of his admirable traits." She sighed unconsciously. "He was all admirable, middle-aged traits, and I wasn't, and I suppose that's why it fizzled the way it did."

Gloom overspread Nancy's countenance, as she thought of the past.

"I wonder," hazarded Mrs. Thorpe, after an interval of decent silence, "if Theodore Ashley has ever married."

Nancy grew gloomier still.

"No, I feel certain he hasn't." She sprang to her feet and banged down the trunk cover with an air of shutting the lid on storage dust and memories. "If you love me, auntie, go down and make a cup of tea. I'll hang this petticoat out in the air and then wrap it up again."

She stepped out onto a small top-story balcony. The silk of the petticoat swished murmurously as she moved, and she lifted a breadth of it to rub across her cheek, purring with kittenlike delight. Then, suddenly, she became aware that, from somewhere, unseen eyes were fixed upon her.

He was a young chap of twenty-five or six, perhaps, smiling up quite frankly from his seat on a clump of rocks near the road. As she made an involuntary movement to conceal the petticoat, his smile widened into a mischievous grin. Even while resenting that grin, Nancy noticed what strong white teeth he had, and that he was distinctly good to look at. However, she decided that the situation demanded a display of dignity on her part, so she spread the petticoat out on the rail with elaborate care, perked her chin scornfully, as once more she met the stranger's eye, and marched back into the house.

Alone in the storeroom, she dropped her dignity so quickly that if it had been a tangible thing, it would have struck the floor with a thud. Was he still staring up at the balcony, she wondered. She dragged a chair toward the dormer window and peeped through the curtain at him. Yes, he was still engaged in that idiotic occupation, but with an entire change of expression. He had a peculiar, intent look, as of one watching the surprising antics of a circus performer. Yet the balcony was empty! But the next second she understood. Wind-driven, a mass of pink silk pirouetted past the window as gracefully as if clothing the limbs of a Russian dancer. Heavens, that petticoat! Nancy ran to a window at the other end of the room to observe its final fate. Vividly apparent, far out on the bough of a fir tree, the garment caught and roosted like a huge rosy parrot, a portion of it hanging free, to flap like a cheerful tail.

Nancy felt her face grow hot. It was positively indelicate in an undergarment to flaunt itself in the face and eyes of everybody, male and female alike, the way that raffle article was doing! Doubtless the impertinent young man was laughing outright at her and it by this time. She scampered back to the dormer window to see if her

suspitions were correct. It gave her an odd feeling of disappointment to discover that the stranger had disappeared. She liked tall men. They made her feel so cuddly and cozy and taken-care-of as she walked along beside them. And he was certainly the most eligible-appearing creature she had seen in years. Most men were so hopelessly commonplace even to look at! What was his name, she wondered. What was he, anyhow? Where did he live?

She closed her eyes, prompted by the return of common sense. She was no longer dreaming, irresponsible Nancy Edwards in her teens; she was of age, and disillusioned. Why, then, waste time in useless conjectures about a stray, inconsequential young man who was doubtless engaged to some one else? She opened her eyes and again stared eagerly through the curtains, just to prove how stray and inconsequential he really was.

Across the teacups, she related the escapade of the petticoat to her aunt.

"We can get it down by using that painter's ladder some one left here," suggested Mrs. Thorpe.

"Mercy!" ejaculated Nancy, joggling her tea agitatedly as she lowered her cup. "I wouldn't disturb it for anything! I wanted to be rid of it, anyhow—it reminds me of Theodore."

"But surely you wouldn't permit that dainty garment to whip to pieces out there in the wind and rain?"

"Why not?" Nancy dimpled mischievously, but her voice was determined. "The birds can carry it away shred by shred, and make nice pink linings for their nests. It should be very becoming to the baby birds' complexions!" And her small white hand waved a final dismissal to the subject.

But the trouble with dismissed subjects is that sometimes they refuse to remain dismissed.

"Of course," declared Mrs. Thorpe

the next day as, fresh from the village, she burst in upon Nancy with an exciting piece of news, "there's no question but that your petticoat was the cause of the accident. He must have been trying to recover it for you when he fell and broke his leg. I've found out that his name is Alfred Clayton, and that——"

"Oh, dear auntie, never mind his name!" interrupted Nancy impatiently. "But for goodness' sake tell me how the poor fellow ever managed to get home!"



She decided that the situation demanded a display of dignity on her part, so she spread the petticoat out on the rail with elaborate care.

"He improvised some kind of a crutch, and just limped along until he got there. He lives in that next big cabin up the hill."

"We must go and call on him at once," declared Nancy. "If he's too ill to see us, we'll leave cards and regrets. He was hurt in trying to do us a service, and common humanity demands that we show him every attention possible. We mustn't even stop to change our clothes. What we look like doesn't matter in the least." And she promptly added to her costume a becoming blue sweater and a tasseled blue tam.

A pale-eyed Swedish woman rather grudgingly opened the door, when they reached the house on the hill, closing it behind her to answer their inquiries.

"If you hadn't waved your basket of jellies under her nose, I don't believe she'd have let us in at all," whispered Nancy, as the woman tiptoed into the sitting room beyond.

Plainly visible through the open door was a tall, boyish figure resting on a couch near the fireplace, near him a stand of surgical supplies. His face was almost as white as the coverlid over him, but a single glance convinced Nancy that the young man was indeed he of the tantalizing smile. He was fast asleep.

She took a seat just inside the door, while her aunt followed the maid into the kitchen. Of course they would leave their cards and condole with the victim of the petticoat some other time. Her feet burrowing luxuriously in a deep fur rug, her hands on the arms of a wide, masculine chair, she leaned forward and gazed at him with unconcealed curiosity. Inoffensively asleep, and with that deep crease in his forehead, he was not nearly so handsome, she concluded, as when impertinently awake and exhibiting a row of gleaming teeth. And just then he awoke.

"I beg your pardon," said Nancy, blushing furiously. "I didn't mean to wake you up."

He blinked at her dazedly for a moment, and then smiled with sudden radiance.

"The petticoat girl!" he announced, with delighted amazement. "It's really you, isn't it?"

Nancy's embarrassment disappeared as rapidly as it had come. His manner was so off-hand and boyish it put her at her ease in a moment.

"The same," she answered, dimpling back at him. "But I didn't suppose you'd recognize me with a clean face and my hair done up."

"Well, I did. Only, for just a second or two, I thought I must be dreaming you."

Nancy's tone and manner altered to dignified seriousness.

"I'm so sorry you were hurt on my account," she said. "That's what I came over to say."

"But how do you know it was on your account?" he answered lightly. "Maybe I was just chasing a squirrel when I started to climb that tree."

"If I didn't see the particular animal you were chasing right now, folded up on the end of that mantelboard, I might believe you," said Nancy. "And the worst of it is that it wasn't worth your trouble. It really belongs to some

one else—and now I shall send the old thing right back to him—her—them, I mean," and this time her blush was scarlet. "I wish I'd done it in the first place," she hastened on. "Then I wouldn't ever have hung it out on the balcony, and it wouldn't have blown away, and you wouldn't have broken a leg going after it."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the young man, giving a lurch that caused his features to contract painfully from the twinge it gave his injured limb. "You musn't blame yourself—I won't stand for it! It was no one's fault but my own that I undertook the job, or that I wound up by fumbling it the way I did. My only consolation was that I managed to untwist the pretty bunch of fluff before the bough broke and let me down."

"You're very kind, but I can't help feeling guilty, nevertheless, and I brought over some jelly to atone. I suppose jelly's just the thing for a broken leg, isn't it?" she added, her laughter inviting a response from him and getting it.

"A sure cure, especially when accompanied by a little girl in blue."

"That's Auntie's voice you hear out there," Nancy stated hastily, feeling that perhaps their mutual informality needed to be reminded of convention. "She came over with me."

At that moment a big collie bumped himself in through the swing door. He came straight up to Nancy, thrusting his long nose across her knee. She crumpled one of his silken ears in her hand.

"Well," she inquired, in answer to his friendly overtures, "and what do you think of your neighbor, anyhow?"

"He thinks," replied the occupant of the couch, "that she's a discovery I should have made long ago."

"I was addressing the dog," Nancy reminded him.

"But he can't answer, and I can."

Again they laughed together. Across the space of a friendly fireplace their young eyes met and clung. Something sweet, thrilling, electrical passed between them. A conscious silence fell. Nancy was the first to break it.

"What a heavy mist is coming up!" she observed, gazing through the window with exaggerated interest.

"Is there?" inquired Clayton unbelievably. "I thought the sun was shining his head off."

The next afternoon, Nancy called again.

"I think I wished you here," said Clayton, grasping the hand she offered him. "I've been thinking of you steadily for the last hour. When a fellow lies awake all night on account of his confounded leg, he can't be blamed for wanting a sugarplum to reward him for it, now can he?"

So Nancy got into the habit of merciful daily visits.

Propinquity is a worker of miracles. It abolishes time, refuses to consider space, and imperiously sweeps aside the thousand and one conventions society has established to keep young souls from finding their true mates.

At the close of one week, Nancy Edwards and Alfred Clayton were vowing eternal friendship; during the second, they engaged in earnest discussions on love and marriage, Nancy declaring her firm intention to be an old-maid school-teacher, and Clayton affirming that he was born to be a selfish bachelor. At the close of the third week, "I love you, little girl!" Clayton declared, and Nancy, kneeling by his couch, nestled her fair head against his shoulder.

"Oh, boy, I love you, too!"

"Uncle Tad may be here any day now," he announced joyously, as she was getting ready to go, "and I'll be so proud to show you off to him and tell him we're engaged! He's done everything for me in a business way,

you know, and my choice of a wife will mean a lot to him. I thought it tough luck when he sent me up from New York in advance of him to open up this shack, but it was the best thing that ever happened. He'll say so, too, when he sees you, no matter if he is a woman hater."

"A woman hater?" Nancy's blue eyes opened wide. Somehow her glowing happiness was chilled. "Why, you never told me that about your uncle before! It makes me feel afraid he won't like me."

"Oh, yes, he will!" asserted Clayton proudly. "He'll see at a glance you're just the cuddly kind of a little creature to curl herself up inside a man's heart and stay there. And, anyhow, it takes true girls like you to bring back a man's lost faith in women. I feel that you'll do a lot for Uncle Tad in that regard."

"But what made him lose faith?" inquired Nancy, reminded of a disagreeable episode in her own life. "Did some one treat him badly?"

"Some one certainly did! Uncle Tad never found one word of fault with the girl—wouldn't talk about her at all, in fact—but—well, he expected to be married a few years ago, day all set and everything, and something happened at the last minute to call it off. He never accused her of it, but we all knew there was but one explanation—the girl had thrown him over. He never said so in so many words, of course, but he told me once that the day he was to have been married was the blackest one in his whole life. He's fought shy of women ever since."

He was so absorbed in his story that he did not notice how still Nancy had grown, nor that her eyes had the look of one calling up unpleasant memories.

"I don't see how any girl could have had the heart to mistreat Uncle Tad," he went on earnestly. "It was like cutting the throat of a faithful dog. I never had a grudge against a woman

before, but if I ever met that one, I should welcome the chance to tell her just what I thought of her."

Nancy started to speak, then desisted. She saw the Swedish girl coming toward them, a telegram in her hand.

"Why, this is from Uncle Tad now!" exclaimed Clayton joyously, on tearing it open. "He's due to arrive this very night. Isn't that bully news, Nancy?"

Nancy murmured an indistinct response. Clayton had allowed the telegram to flutter to the floor, and she stooped to pick it up. As she did so, she saw the signature.

"I suppose," she said unemotionally, "that you couldn't ever get to be friends with the girl who broke with him, could you?"

"Of course not!" In his voice was

"Nancy!" Clayton raised himself on his elbow in amazement. "Have you gone crazy? What on earth do you mean?"

Nancy began to laugh wildly, holding the telegram out in front of her.



"The petticoat girl!" he announced with delighted amazement. "It's really you, isn't it?"

righteous indignation. "I hope I'm too loyal to Uncle Tad to ever permit the lady to square herself with me, even if she should make the effort. She'll get what's coming to her in the long run, never fear! Her kind always does."

"Oh," cried Nancy quiveringly, "why have you always called him 'Tad' instead of by his real name—'Theodore?' If I had only known who he was from the first, I'd never have come near you!"

"Theodore Ashley your uncle! Could anybody ever imagine anything so funny—and awful—as this—this that's happened to me?"

Clayton sank back.

"Nancy!" he gasped.

"Yes, it's true! I'm the girl—the girl you can't ever be friends with!"

Clayton put his hand to his head dazedly.

"Then if you really are the girl," he said slowly, "knowing you as I do—

Uncle Tad must have given you some excuse for what you did."

"No, he was always irreproachable," Nancy declared, refusing to spare herself. "I was just young and fickle and—and afraid to go on with it—utterly unworthy of his love. I wasn't even kind or gentle when I broke with him. We were to have been married in a country parsonage by a friend of his, and I waited until the very morning of the wedding day and then acted like a coward and never went to the parsonage at all—nor sent any word—just took a train for California instead, after packing all his presents up in a rush and sending them back. That petticoat you rescued was left out by accident. Oh, I've pictured to myself a thousand times how the poor man must have sat there at the parsonage and waited, and waited, and waited, for a bride that never came!"

There was a moment of strained silence. Clayton lay with his arm across his eyes.

"But no matter how unworthy I am," Nancy went on tumultuously, "I know where your loyalty belongs. It belongs to your Uncle Tad, and I wouldn't turn you aside from it if I could. I release you. You are free!"

She turned and fled from the house.

The glow from Clayton's window set the dewdrops aglitter on grass and shrub as it lighted the path up the hill for Nancy. Always that light in the window meant that Clayton needed her. To-night she had tried to ignore the steady summons of that signal, but in vain. As she neared the cabin, it seemed to her that she could almost hear the frightened pounding of her heart. It would not be easy to face at

one and the same time the man she loved and the man she had wronged. But when she had once set her arm against the door, there was visible only the familiar boyish figure lying upon the familiar couch.

"Uncle Tad has gone upstairs," said Clayton prosaically, "and won't be down again until morning. He knew I had sent for you."

At that, Nancy's knees sank from under her, and that was how she found herself kneeling by Clayton's side.

"Oh, he hates me, he hates me! I know he does! Why did you send for me to come?"

"Because Uncle Tad feels kindly toward you, and I wanted you to know it. He says he's happy, and wants you to be happy, too."

"Happy?" Nancy clutched at the coverlid in the intensity of her emotion. "Are you sure of that? Do you mean that, after all, I didn't break his heart and wreck his life when I failed to meet him at the parsonage?"

Before he answered, Clayton possessed himself of Nancy's cold little hand. He pressed his lips to each rigid finger in turn to break the shock of what he had to tell her.

"No, you didn't break his heart nor wreck his life. You see, you weren't the only one to get scared on that wedding morning. Uncle Tad confessed to me that he got into a regular blue funk because he'd concluded you were too young and giddy for him, and didn't show up at the parsonage, either! When he got his courage back and went to hunt you up, you had gone to California. True? Blessedly true, Nancy, and now he's in love with a red-haired widow. Oh, Nancy—kiss me again!"



The Parkin Plan in Marcella Street

By Winifred Arnold

Author of "The Parlow Reunion," "Mrs. Radigan's Picnic," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

Whether or not you have ever belonged to a Soap Club, this story, with its humor and genuine humanity, will delight you. Mrs. Radigan is still herself, although many months have elapsed since her famous "picnic."

MRS. RADIGAN sat upon her somewhat rickety front doorstep and drank in the glories of the pictured page spread over her ample blue-gingham lap.

"Fifty cakes of Dear Home," she murmured in tones of rapt admiration, switching her gaze to a paper which she drew out of an envelope; "a box each of Sweet Vi'let and Rosy Glow Toilet Soap; two pounds of Our Own Special blend of Tasty Tea; one pound of Parkin's Baking Powder——"

Her voice sank into an indistinct murmur under the weight of the ocean of opulence, and then rose again to the surface in an outburst of awe and admiration, as she turned back to the book in her lap:

"All that, and that Restful Reclining Rocker—fumed oak, upholstered with artificial Spanish leather, with oil-tempered spinal springs and an adjustable foot rest!"

It would have been evident to the meanest intelligence that "The Parkin Plan" had struck Mrs. Radigan, of 16 Marcella Street. She did not even look up when Mrs. Smith, of 15 Marcella, waddled across that dusty thoroughfare and up the cinder path to the steps.

"Wal, now, Mary Jane Radigan," bantered the guest, "still studyin' away at that picter book that your cousin in the country sent, be ye? I bet you know it by heart by this time, and full

as well as you do your Bible," she chuckled.

Mrs. Radigan "came to," as she would have expressed it, and grinned amiably.

"Now see here, Mirandy Smith," she retorted, "I'll bet you don't take so much interest as you might, neither, in that solid-gold furniture set with diamonds that Reverend Foley makes so much talk about! Fumed oak and Spanish leather is tasty enough for me, and oil-tempered spinal springs to your back would set enough sight more comfortable than slabs o' gold, to my way of thinking."

"Mine, too," agreed Mrs. Smith, dropping ponderously upon a corner of the steps not covered by Mrs. Radigan's draperies. "But I don't s'pose there's any need of buying even toilet soap up there, let alone washing powder and common yellow. Seems odd, don't it? I dunno how I'll ever get along without my Sat'day-night bath. Seems as if ma thrashed it into my very bones, same as I've tried to into my young ones."

"It's an awful bargain, though," commented Mrs. Radigan, returning abruptly to matters secular. "Just listen, now, to the things that my cousin got for ten dollars!" Once more she ran triumphantly through the list, ending lyrically: "And on top of all that, a Restful Reclining Rocker—made of fumed oak——"



"It ain't just soap," explained Mrs. Radigan. "It's tea and peanut butter and milk of magnesia and corn plasters and knives and dresses and spices, and land only knows what all!"

"And good money's worth even without that chair!" interrupted Mrs. Smith, to whose ears the charms of the wondrous chair were no longer a novelty. "But that's what 'tis to marry rich. 'Them as has gits,' as the Bible says, and no truer word did it ever speak.

"There's your Cousin Annie with a farmer for a husband, and as such able to go down into her cellar any hour of the day or night and bring up a mess of potatoes or onions or even a cabbage. I came from the country myself and I know. And on top of that, she can have chairs thrown in with her soap! And here am I, married to John

Smith—that never got a job of work in his life that he didn't sprout a boil on his neck or something and have to lay off immejit—and can I buy soap by the cartload? No, indeed! It's all I can do to rake up five cents at a time to do my washings with!"

"It ain't just soap," explained Mrs. Radigan, painstakingly shuffling the leaves to prove her point. "It's tea and peanut butter and milk of magnesia and corn plasters and knives and dresses and spices, and land only knows what all!"

"Well, where'm I going to get ten dollars all in a lump to pay for anything?" demanded Mrs. Smith with unusual asperity. "One-seventy-five that I get when Mis' Starbuck pays for her laundry is the biggest wad of money I ever lay hands on, Mary Jane Radigan, as you know full well by the times you've lent me for rent.

"But there!" she ended, with an abrupt relapse to her usual philosophical tone.

"There's lots worse men than Smith. He always lets me spend it the way I want to, anyhow—if I only consult him proper. Lots of men would beat you up and take it away from you. And I s'pose all can't be farmers."

"No, indeed," agreed Mrs. Radigan tactfully. "And Annie complains a sight 'cause she can't get to the picture shows as often as she wants to. Things even up pretty well in the long run. Say, Mirandy"—her voice dropped almost guiltily—"I want to ask you something: How'd you think that chair would look in my parlor?"

"Why, Mary Jane Radigan!" Mrs.

Smith twisted perilously upon her scanty corner of the doorstep. "You don't mean to tell me— Have you had another windfall like the day of the picnic?"

Mrs. Radigan nodded.

"You might call it that." She smiled. "You recollect the fifteen dollars outer my picnic money that I paid for Timmy Milligan—so't he wouldn't have to go to jail for breaking that window? Well, that blessed boy got a job the very next week, and he's been saving up—bless his heart!—ever since, and last night him and his mother come over and paid me ten dollars—just three days after I got that picter book. Ain't that the hand of Providence?"

"Well, you just bet it is!" agreed Mrs. Smith heartily. "Pointing straight at your parlor, too. O' course I've never said nothing before, but that parlor of yours certainly does look awful bare, except when dressed up with a casket or the like."

Mrs. Radigan smiled reminiscently.

"I know it does," she admitted. "But it did look elegant, didn't it, time of Radigan's funeral, with him in one corner and that Gates Ajar in the other?"

"Beautiful!" Mrs. Smith nodded her heartfelt assent. "A perfect picter! But, as I say, you ain't always in a position to have it dressed up like that. And that chair would fill up the corner pretty near as well, and not be just for looks. Have you made out your list?"

Mrs. Radigan shook her head.

"That's the trouble," she answered, with a humorous twist of her wide, pleasant mouth. "Whatever in the world am I going to do with all that mess of stuff when I get it?"

Mrs. Smith chuckled.

"Same as you would with the money, Mary Jane Radigan," she said with a wave of her plump hand, palm out, that just matched the slow, pitying shake of her head and the expressive smile. "Give it away or lend it to the neighbors.

This way you'll have the chair anchored, anyhow—unless Daddy McTaggart's rheumatics is too bad."

"Oh, you go on now, Mirandy Smith!" protested Mrs. Radigan, rising ponderously to her feet. "You know I don't never lend nothing to nobody. I don't believe in it!" A conscious smile twitched at the corners of her lips. "Anyhow, they always pay it back—well, oftener than you'd think, anyhow. Oh, quit your grinnin', Mirandy Smith, and think of Timmy Milligan! I'm going in to get a paper and pencil, and I won't be but one minute." The screen door clicked behind her.

As the only pencil in the house happened to be behind the cracker box on the third shelf, the "one minute" lengthened into several. But what cared Mrs. Smith, proud and sole repository of a thrilling bit of information?

"Mis' Milligan?" she shrilled cheerfully. "Oh, Mis' Milligan, have ye heard the news? Mis' Milligan!"

Around the corner of 14 Marcella Street ambled Mrs. Milligan. Across the street flew the excited steps of Miss Mary O'Reilly. Mrs. Steinberg and Mrs. Bates, passing on the sidewalk, paused in unfeigned and friendly interest.

Marcella Street may have its drawbacks as a place of residence—as a few rabid sanitarians contend—but a lack of the fundamental human emotions is not among them. By the time Mrs. Radigan returned to her front door, so many of her friends and neighbors had heard the glad tidings and congregated to help her make out her order that nobody noticed her reappearance. The Parkin catalogue was passing feverishly from hand to hand.

"If 'twas mesilf, now, that was buyin'," announced Mrs. Milligan firmly, "I should be layin' in a grand good stock o' spices and the likes. They're crool high when you buy 'em by the littles."

"I'd just buy soap," proffered meek little Mrs. Beers. "What 'twould be to have enough laid by so't you wouldn't have to send down to the store whenever you want to rub something through unexpected—" Her clasped hands finished the sentence.

"It's duds for mine!" contributed Miss Mary O'Reilly's high-keyed voice. "This page of jools makes me fair sick with longing. And just cast one eye over those petticoats beyant!"

"Ach, Himmel, dose t'ings fur de childrens!" said another. "If I could jüst buy-dose Danny-Boy clothes for my Ikey! Dat boy ain't never yet had —" The sentence ended in a sob.

"There, there, now!" It was Mrs. Milligan's kindly voice. "Don't you fret, now, darlint. It's ten cents I'm layin' now that Mary Jane Radigan will order it for ye and let you buy it off of her, a few cents at a time. Mis' Smith, here, she was just a-sayin' that it was kind of up a stump she felt what to buy."

"I wonder if she'd get some tea-spoons for me," cried Mrs. Bates eagerly. "I couldn't pay for 'em all to once, maybe, but I could manage a quarter a week, I guess, and—"

"That rolled-gold-plate locket!" lifted Miss Mary O'Reilly. "And that pendant with the three di'monds!"

"Well, then"—Mrs. Smith's tone was biting sarcasm—"it's not what she buys that I'm trying to get away from her, poor soul. It's her premium for mine. I'll take her Reclining Rocker out from under her myself!"

"Oh, but did you see that mission-wood rocker!" responded Mrs. Beers, wholly unconscious of the sarcasm. "I'm so partial to that mission-wood furniture!"

"Pity we couldn't be startin' one of these cloobs that they tell about over to the front there," cried Miss O'Reilly suddenly. "Then we could all be get-

tin' just what we want, premiums and all."

A chorus of eager voices demanded further explanations—in full—at once. Miss O'Reilly affected an off-hand manner.

"Why, hasn't nobody else been seein' the front pages at all?" she demanded. "Why, I didn't be radin' through it so careful myself, not thinkin' of explainin' it to nobody, but 'twas somethin' like this: Ye'd be gettin' together a bunch o' tin ladies——"

The fourteen ladies present decidedly bristled.

"Ten ladies!" protested Mrs. Milligan and Mrs. Bates with one voice.

"Ten ladies?"

"Tin ladies," repeated Miss O'Reilly firmly, "and tin months. And a dollar apiece ivery month. That's tin dollars a month the cloob raises, and one of the bunch a-gettin' a tin-dollar premium."

"But why all this ten business?" demanded Mrs. Bates pugnaciously. "There's fourteen ladies here, besides Mis' Radigan—and the prices don't all run to ten dollars."

"I expect they took the idee from the King's Daughters, likely," suggested Mrs. Smith pacifically. "I belonged to one of them when I was a girl and everything with them was ten and one. Ten times one is ten—that was our motter that we lived by."

"Dot vas goot for beezness, likely," offered Mrs. Steinberg; and Miss O'Reilly hastened to accept the suggestion.

"And it's right ye are, Mrs. Steinberg," she said. "Tin ladies it was, just as I was tellin' ye. But there was somethin' about the different prices. It took such a bother o' figgerin', though, that it fair cracked my brain. 'There's more ten-dollar premiums than I can be buyin',' says I to mesilf. But of coorse"—she paused and glanced meaningly about her—"the one of ye

that's secretary will have no trouble in makin' it out——"

The masterly shot told. Well did Miss O'Reilly know the Achilles' heel of her street.

"What—what does the secretary have to do?" inquired a hesitating voice. It hardly seemed possible that it belonged to Mrs. Bates, but it did.

"Oh, nothin' much at all," responded Miss O'Reilly lightly. "Just writin' the letter, and sinderin' the orders, and addin' and subtractin' and multiplyin' and suchlike for them as is not content with ten-dollar premiums, and collectin' the money and advancin' it, belike, for them as is not quite up to the minute, and a few things like that."

The potential members of the Parkin Club looked at one another and shook their heads. None of the ladies of Marcella Street were what is known as "sharks" in either penmanship or mathematics, to say nothing of having money to lend.

"If only Mis' Radigan could belong!" sighed Mrs. Beers. "She ain't so much of a scholar, but she'd fix things up somehow."

"Mis' Radigan has money and can buy as she likes. She can't be bothering with the likes of us!" began Mrs. Smith sharply, but the creak of the opening screen door cut her short.

"Bothering with the likes of you, Mirandy Smith!" cried Mrs. Radigan's brisk and cheerful voice. "Bothering with the likes of you! Why, I've been standing there listening to you folks talking till I thought I should bust! The idea of your fixing all that without me! O' course I'll join a club! Land knows I'd rather be sociable than rich any day. Nobody needn't never ask me to be Mrs. John D."

"And will you be secretary, too?" inquired Mrs. Bates. "It'll be an awful job, I expect, but——"

"Sure I'll be sekkerterry," agreed Mrs. Radigan blithely. "There's a

dandy young feller down to my bank that'll help me with the writing part. And as long as I've got that ten dollars laying around idle, I can send off the order jest as soon as we make it out, and you can fetch me around the cash when it's handy."

Upon these agreeable terms, the Parkin Club of Marcella Street was immediately organized. Its resemblance to the King's Daughters proved in the end no obstacle, for, when pressed to commit themselves to a policy that demanded the regular payment of a dollar a month, six ladies unobtrusively withdrew.

This left only nine members; but Miss O'Reilly, keen on the scent of her diamond pendant, posted off in great haste to Phelps Avenue, and soon returned with a crackling new dollar bill and the name of one Mrs. Peter O'Donnell who would be glad to join—if she might have the first premium. Her own sister's daughter, it appeared, was to be married the very next week. The groom being the proprietor of a very "swell saloon," Mrs. O'Donnell naturally longed to do credit to "her side" of the house by an equally "swell" present. And a Parkin mission rocker would exactly fill the bill, with the additional advantage that himself—who was strangely lacking in proper in-law pride—would pay for it unwittingly under the innocent guise of soap and tea.

The Parkin Club warmed to Mrs. O'Donnell at once. They, too, knew what it was to have relatives who were unpopular with the masculine heads of the house; they, too, had to deal with men who had to be "managed" for their country's—and wives'—good.

"Of course Mis' Radigan ought to have the first choice," protested Mrs. Bates rather weakly, "but——"

"Of course," agreed Mrs. Smith. "But nine times one ain't ten, nohow you fix it, so we do need that Mrs.

O'Donnell bad, besides being wives' and aunts ourselves. If only she could wait a month——"

"Oh, lawsy me, you needn't worry about my end of it," interrupted Mrs. Radigan cordially. "Mebbe, when I see her chair, I'll want that instead o' the one I picked out. Or, now that I'm sekkerterry, I may feel the need of a desk. Who knows?"

So it was settled; and excitement reigned in Marcella Street. How much soap, how much spice, how much tea, should one order? And here was wall paper! And there the "jools" so admired of Miss O'Reilly! It was almost too much of a strain on the human mind to choose one paltry dollar's worth from all that richness.

Mrs. Radigan and her "dandy young feller," by name Scott, performed prodigies of management, but even they were at loss for a second when it came to the pair of scrim curtains, price one dollar and a half, which Mrs. Milligan decided upon at the eleventh hour and fifty-fifth minute.

"And it's yersilf that's knowin' I can't buy wan this month and wan the nixt, wid me mother comin' to visit unexpected and her so down on Tim," lamented Mrs. Milligan.

"Sure, sure," agreed Mrs. Radigan soothingly. "Why, I'll just wait about part of mine and lend you the fifty cents' worth. Hand me back that list, now, Mr. Scott, and let me see what I can cross off."

That long-suffering young man proved anew that he was truly "a dandy young feller" by fishing up a cheerful smile along with the list, which he had just been preparing to copy for the umpty-umth time.

"You don't seem to have counted in your extra fifty cents' worth, Mrs. Radigan," he remarked, as he handed it over. "Why don't you lend her that, and not mix this up any more?"

"Fifty cents?" demanded Mrs. Rad-

igan eagerly. "Whadya mean—my fifty cents?"

Mr. Scott's smile expanded into a grin.

"Oh, now don't tell me you don't know about your secretary graft, Mrs. Radigan! You're too innocent to be human! Great Scott, woman, have you omitted to learn by heart page two—'The Fine Rewards You Can Earn'—meaning that fifty cents each month, and the 'valuable coupons,' and all the rest of that dope?"

Mrs. Radigan leaned forward with shining eyes.

"Now what chance have I had to be reading anything, with that book whirling about Marcella Street as if 'twas on a merry-go-round?" she demanded jocularly. "But is that the truth, now—that I get an extra fifty cents' worth, fifty whole cents' worth just for being sekkerterry? Then take it and welcome, Mis' Milligan. I only wish I was going to have that Reclining Rocker in time to lend you that for the old lady to rest her bones in. I'll bring over my new sofa pillow in the morning." She turned back toward her assistant.

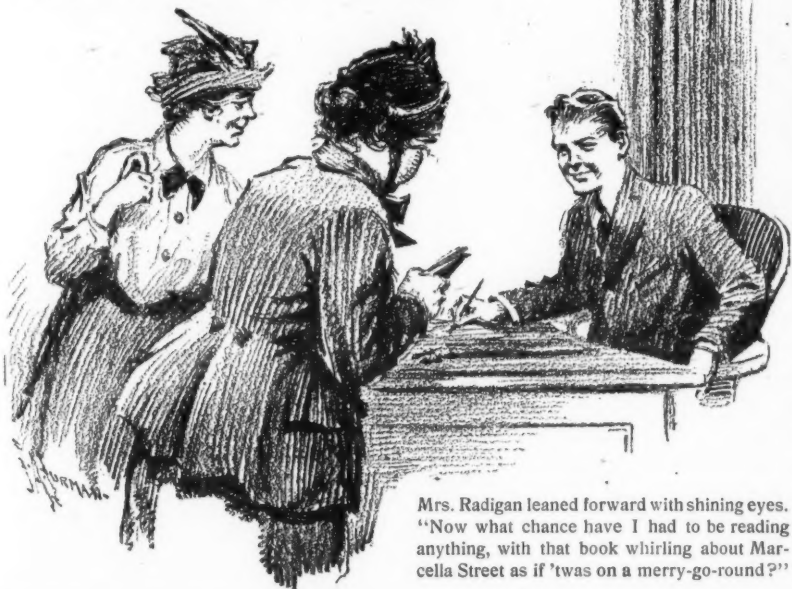
"Did you say I got that every month?" she inquired. "Because, if so, I guess I'll just cut out them two things"—she indicated swiftly—"and run in that fifty-cent waist-pin set—let's see—No. 19207 M 'tis—for Mary O'Reilly. She wanted it dreadful, but the gold locket was all she could get for her dollar. Come on, Mis' Milligan. I'll bet ten cents he can do his sums better if we ain't here. I could, I know. So long, then, Mr. Scott. I've got the stockings to darn right here in my bag. The shirts I'm waiting to match the buttons to. Parkin' buttons you're going to draw, mister. I spotted 'em for you the minute my eye lit onto the page."

With a quizzical smile, young Mr. Scott watched the swirl of their departure. Then, as the door slammed—

behind them, "Isn't she the limit?" he murmured. "The absolute limit? It sure looks to me——" His eyes narrowed, and he slowly shook his head as he swung around in his chair. "Of course it's a risk," he murmured after a moment, "but she'd believe anything I said, so I guess I can bluff it all right if I need to. Twenty dollars' worth is not to be sneezed at, believe me, and she'd just throw it right and left if she knew."

And with meticulous care, he tore

versation, to eliminate inanities about the weather, discussion of illnesses and symptoms, sympathetic sighs over the servant problem. None of them have succeeded. Why? Because none of them have ever tried this simple, yet sufficient formula: Live in Marcella Street and patronize a Parkin Club!



Mrs. Radigan leaned forward with shining eyes. "Now what chance have I had to be reading anything, with that book whirling about Marcella Street as if 'twas on a merry-go-round?"

page two from the book and tucked it away in his desk. Strangely enough, the same leaves were also lacking in the bundle of new catalogues that he distributed along with the orders one week later, with Mrs. Radigan seated proudly by his side in his little car. But for a time, at least, no one noticed it.

Many agencies in this world have tried for one reason or another to change the tone of the ordinary con-

Did the ladies of Marcella Street have time to discuss the vagaries of the climate and the crimes of the weather man? Indeed no! Not for the next ten months, at least. They were too much occupied in comparing the relative merits of the piano bench on page one hundred and five with the desk on one hundred and fifteen and values of various soaps and spices. Could they prattle of illness when the charms of Mrs. O'Donnell's sister's daughter's

wedding present were to be discussed? Could they chatter about servants when, to begin with, they kept no servants and when, in the second place, each revolving month brought the thrilling questions: "Whose turn shall it be to draw the prize this time?" and "What, in our opinion, separately and collectively requested, is it wisest for her to choose?"

Certainly the promoters of the Parkin Plan had in no way overestimated its wonderful social features! Sentiment, too, the plan fostered to an unexpected and gratifying extent.

It had been tacitly understood that, after Mrs. O'Donnell's wedding present was out of the way, Mrs. Radigan was to get her chair. But then there was Mrs. Milligan's parlor rug, necessitated by her mother's unfavorable comments upon Milligan as a provider; the Infants' Wardrobe Box, demanded by an addition to Mrs. Steinberg's collection of olive branches—it was used for two of the older branches to sleep in; the rope portières without which Rachel Nazareth's marriage could *not* be solemnized; and the desk for Mrs. Wiener's ambitious offspring, who had "earn't dot money all by himself, yet!"

A pause—and once more the motif of the Reclining Rocker was making itself heard when, in an unlucky moment, Mrs. Beers, preparing to cast her friendly, appraising eye over those Restful Reclining lines, chanced instead upon the Jacobean Armchair, and the theme of sentiment and period furniture came in.

By a wonderful coincidence, Mr. Beers' name happened to be Jacob, and his birthday fell within that very month.

"Not that I should 'a' known it myself," explained Mrs. Beers frankly to Mrs. Radigan, when she went to lay the case before her, "if Jake's mother hadn't 'a' died last fall and his sister sent on the Bible for his share. She said that, being the oldest son, she knew

he'd rather have that than the silver spoons or the plush rocker. Much she knows about it! But don't it seem kinder like fate—him being named Jacob and even Beers?"

Mrs. Radigan, being no Latin scholar, was properly impressed and agreed cordially; adding that, to her mind, to disregard such a "leading" as that would be flying in the face of Providence.

"And there ain't the slightest hurry about mine, anyway," she explained later to the loyally protesting Mrs. Smith. "My parlor ain't likely to be opened for a wedding or a funeral in a good while yet, and I'll just hold off about having a party till I'm fixed up. It's more stylish to have 'em in the kitchen, anyway. I notice, 'most every time I read the society-doings column, that the heft of 'em seems to be giving dinners. Why, say, though, speaking of parties, wouldn't it be neat to give Jake Beers a birthday surprise? He was awful good when Radigan passed away so sudden, and I'll take my this month's fifty cents and buy him a set of gold shirt buttons. Say, come on now, let's go over to Mis' Milligan's and plan it out."

The party was an unqualified success; such a success, in fact, that Miss Mary O'Reilly, fired by the romantic aspect of Mr. Jacob Beers lolling comfortably in his Jacobean armchair, forthwith renounced all interest in the pages of ready-to-wear, demanded the instant ordering of a William-and-Mary telephone set—"It'll make a very handsome center table till I'm gettin' me a telephone"—and set her cap for a certain expressman named Bill McGary with such verve and decision that before the end of the season— However, that, as Mr. Kipling used to remark, is another story; though not by any means to be overlooked by the recording angel when casting up the accounts of the philanthropic Mr. Parkin.

The fever for period furniture, however, though sharp, was brief. Marcella Street is nothing if not philosophical, and when frenzied thumbing of their sacred catalogue failed to disclose any goods and chattels christened Solomon or Miranda or Michael Joseph, the Parkin Club merely shook its head and fell back upon golden oak and "mission wood" with cheerful resignation.

"Just as likely as not it would 'a' been something I didn't need, anyhow, like a piano stool or a Victorola stand," declared Mrs. Smith placidly. "Them would be just the sort of things they'd be likely to name Mirandy. Now I can get my hanging lamp with a clear conscience. I've wanted that hanging lamp for years!"

"Why not call it 'the light of other days' and have it for your anniversary?" suggested Miss O'Reilly, with the sentimental acumen of one in the first throes of the tender passion. "Didn't you say you was married about this time of year?"

"Why, yes," admitted Mrs. Smith, "but 'taint no special kind of a wedding—seventeenth. And land knows having lived with John Smith seventeen years ain't nothin' to celebrate."

"Oh, yes, 'tis," urged Miss O'Reilly warmly. "Ain't everybody that could. Have a party, do, and I'll lend you my William-and-Mary telephone set—and maybe I'll have Mr. McGary drive me over."

Miss O'Reilly might be no professional psychologist, but full well did she know the force of suggestion.

"Do," chimed in Mrs. Radigan. "That birthday party of Jake Beerses went off so good that I'm just dying to attend another. I'll buy a shirt set for John, too," she added craftily. "I've been meaning to give 'em this two months to Mr. Scott—he's so kind and helpful—but I guess he can wait. There's four more to come, dear soul!"

A queer look swept across Miss Mary

O'Reilly's face. For the moment, sentiment was forgotten.

"I wouldn't do that if I was you, Mis' Radigan," she said. "That young man don't need no pay—*more'n he's got!*"

Mrs. Radigan stiffened and her eyes flashed fire.

"Now look a-here, Mary O'Reilly!" she cried. "This ain't the first time you've been hinting things like that! Speak out and make yourself plain! No more beating around the bush!"

Miss O'Reilly's eyes flashed back dauntlessly.

"Well, then, Mary Jane Radigan," she retorted, "what about your kewpons? What's that young man a-doing with those? More'n ten dollars' worth by this time, and not a peep out of you about 'em! It ain't natural."

"Kewpons!" returned Mrs. Radigan hotly. "What kewpons?"

"There!" Miss O'Reilly turned swiftly toward Mrs. Smith. "I told you she didn't be knowing nothing about 'em. Those kewpons for two dollars apiece that you ought to be getting every month for being sekkerterry of our cloob, that's what kewpons, Mary Jane Radigan! It's on page two."

"Two d——" began Mrs. Radigan scornfully, and then stopped. Across her mind floated a hint, a memory. What was it Mr. Scott had said: "The Fine Rewards You Can Earn"—"those valuable coupons——"

"Well, what of that?" demanded Mrs. Radigan sharply. "How did you find out so much?"

Miss O'Reilly hesitated. Could it be that Mrs. Radigan really did know, or was she just pretending? But here Mrs. Smith took up the tale.

"From Bridget O'Donnell," she retorted. "She got her own book direct with her first premium, and there wasn't no pages torn out like in the rest of ours. He handed 'em out, if you remember. Of course, if you're a-giv-

ing him those kewpons, it's all right and no harm done. But we just wanted to be sure he wasn't cheating you."

By a colossal effort of the will, Mrs. Radigan achieved a sketch of her usual jolly laugh.

"Cheating me!" she cried. "Mr. Scott! Well, I should say not! Why, him and me has been pals ever since he come to the Granite Building, and a straighter, honester young feller you won't find in a long summer's day." The very saying of the words reassured her loyal soul. "No, siree," she repeated more firmly. "No straighter nor honester!"

"Then 'what about the kewpons?" Miss O'Reilly was not to be sidetracked.

"That," answered Mrs. Radigan firmly, "will all come out in good time. What was your idea, Mirandy, about that anniversary party for you and John?"

But whatever her manner on the outside, in her heart poor Mrs. Radigan was anything but happy. Mr. Scott's own words—"those valuable coupons"—repeated themselves again and again in her ears. And what was it he had said about page two? That was certainly it. She would go and look.

Page two was gone! Also page eighty-four at the back which would have matched it. Somebody had done a neat job.

"Oh, shucks!" said Mrs. Radigan. "That yellow leaf counts as one and two, that's all. Nobody needn't tell me anything against Mr. Scott. I don't believe it. So!"

But on her way to work the next afternoon, she dropped in upon Mrs. Peter O'Donnell in Phelps Avenue.

It required no particular tact to lead the conversation around to the subject of the Parkin Club.

"Is your book anywheres handy?" she inquired craftily. "I'd like to ask your opinion about that Reclining

Rocker I was talking about—or the table or——". She fumbled awkwardly. "There, now, what page is that table on? I guess I'll have to use the index. Is it in the front of the book? Oh!"

For there it was, plain as daylight—page two and "The Fine Rewards You Can Earn."

With a sick heart, she turned back to the search for the table, babbled of a piano bench, or a window panel, settled indifferently upon a Massive Pedestal for Heavy Palms and Statuary, and departed with a look upon her face which caused the keen-eyed Mrs. O'Donnell to shake her head sagely.

"And it's sorry somebody's goin' to be for that young felly when she gits through wid 'im," she remarked, with the joy of battle lighting her eye. "She didn't be knowin' before, but she's on now, the young scalawag! Bad cess to him!"

But the meeting, to a person of pugilistic tendencies, would have been a sad disappointment.

"Oh, hullo, Mrs. Radigan," cried young Mr. Scott, looking up from his desk. "How's the Parkin Club?"

"And so straight and honest looking!" cried Mrs. Radigan's loyal heart. "Who could doubt him?"

"Oh, first class, first class!" she answered aloud, turning her back and dusting vigorously to hide her agitation. "That is—— Say, Mr. Scott, is there any way you could think of—— This time it's to be Mrs. Smith's hanging lamp, but the next——" She hesitated.

"The Restful Reclining Rocker at last? Hooray! I'm scared to death that I'll see you bunked out of that yet."

Mrs. Radigan jumped. Then she beamed.

"Oh, then you will!" she cried. "You will help me out! It's Mrs. McSweeney. Fully expecting of one, as usual, she had planned, when it came her turn, to have a new baby sulky, but

They pushed her forward eagerly.

"What——" stammered Mrs.

Radigan. "Who——

Where——"



here it come unexpected this morning and is twins—thus really needing of the bigger cart, which costs fifteen dollars. So I thought if you could some way manage it so as to—to take it off of mine some way, you know, and give Mrs. McSweeney the bigger one—unknownst?" Her eyes pleaded.

"No!" cried Mr. Scott, banging his hand fiercely down upon his blotting pad. "I'll be darned if I will! Hasn't she got a husband of her own? That vampire street——"

"Oh!" gasped Mrs. Radigan. "Oh, now, Mr. Scott!" and she fled weeping, duster in hand.

From that moment events, as the French say, "marched." Tiring, apparently, of her all too leisurely game, Fate slapped down her cards upon the table with startling speed.

Returning home that evening with reddened eyelids, Mrs. Radigan was confronted by a committee consisting of Mrs. O'Donnell, Miss O'Reilly, and Mrs. Smith.

When questioned as to her interview with Mr. Scott, she stated firmly and unequivocally, first, that there were no coupons issued for her club; second, that she had had them all and had given them to Mr. Scott; third, that she was keeping them for herself; and fourth, that it was nobody's business anyway; and burst into tears.

Time, she sobbed finally, would tell; and Mrs. O'Donnell, recognizing that Mrs. Radigan at least wouldn't, called off her routed forces.

The next morning they charged upon Mr. Scott's office; and when they emerged, after half an hour's conference, they exuded such an air of deep, dark mystery that it was a wonder they were not promptly arrested as suspicious characters.

That afternoon, a very special special-delivery letter winged its way toward the Parkin offices and a prepaid telegram came speeding back.

Upon its receipt, Mr. Scott promptly returned the calls of Mesdames

O'Reilly, Smith, and McGary-to-be, "in congress assembled," and the atmosphere of mystery and satisfaction thereby engendered swelled and bubbled and spread until all Marcella Street was enveloped in it.

All, that is, except Mrs. Thomas Radigan. She, poor soul, went back and forth between home and bank and office building swathed in a mantle of gloom of which her resurrected widow's bonnet and veil were but feeble signs and symbols.

"It ain't so!" she was repeating grimly under her breath as she plodded home through the dark of one early evening. "He's the honestest, straightest young feller that ever was! He wouldn't be seen cheating an old widow woman like me!"

She looked up, to find her little house ablaze with lights and overflowing with happy humanity.

"Welcome to your surprise party!" cried Miss Mary O'Reilly and Mrs. John Smith with one voice, and hauled her lovingly up her own steps. "Come right into your parlor and see 'em in the flesh and take shame to yourself for saying there wa'n't none! Now look here, you kids, git out of that chair and beat it into the kitchen!" They pushed her forward eagerly.

In the corner opposite the door, the Restful Reclining Rocker was realistically rocking. Across the room was the famous Kamchatka Desk. Dutch Curtains hung at the windows, an effective background for the Fern Set, "complete with brass-bound plateau," which rested upon the Beautiful and Ornamental Flower Stand. The Attractive Oak Table in the center of the room bore a Dainty Five-piece Manicure Set decorated with pink roses. It was a

veritable Apotheosis of the Possibilities of the Parkin Plan!

"What——" stammered Mrs. Radigan. "Who—— Where——"

"It's your order and your kewpons!" answered a chorus of eager voices, with Miss Mary O'Reilly's on top. "Thirty dollars' worth, in all! Mr. Scott, he planned it. He kep' 'em back for a surprise, so't you wouldn't give 'em all away. Why, where is Mr. Scott?"

But Mrs. Radigan was not listening. "Mr. Scott?" she cried. "Mr. Scott planned it? Oh, glory be to praise!" With the conquering stride of a Boadicea, she advanced into the room and pounded the Attractive Oak Table till the Dainty Manicure Set danced a horn pipe thereon. "Well, didn't I say he was the honestest, straightest young man?"

Her voice broke suddenly, and a gush of happy tears tried to blot out the smile beneath them—tried and failed.

"I've never had nothing worth while to give ye before," she cried, "and you the best neighbors that ever a woman had. But now, thanks to that blessed young man, I can live up something like to what's in my heart. It's a clubroom you have here, then! Parkin Clubbers and all the rest of ye on the street, it's welcome and free to all, day and night! Daddy McTaggart, set right down in that Restful Reclining Rocker. Mary O'Reilly, it's just the place for your wedding reception! Jennie Howard, wasn't you wanting a manicure set?"

The young man behind the door wiped his nose surreptitiously and then his eyes.

"Well, I'll be darned!" he said then. "I'll—I'll be double darned! As a guardian angel, John Scott, you sure are a frost!"



Dynamite *and* Sudden Death

By Royal Brown

Author of "The Minor Details," "Soapsuds and White of Eggs," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. L. LAMB DIN

Don't let the title frighten you. It's a small-boy story proving that the sons of Adam of all ages are cast in the same mold.

HENRY JONES was what is popularly known as a dancing man.

Thus baldly stated, the fact seems beyond palliation. No male possessed of the requisite number of red corpuscles in his blood would sink to such depths without a struggle that drained the ultimate reservoir of resistance.

Nevertheless, it is possible that, among those sleek, too-well-groomed knights of Terpsichore whom we see lolling about in the limousines of their feminine admirers between *thé dansants*, there are some who were once even as you and I. Circumstance may have exerted an irresistible force upon them. Some one they trusted—a woman, perhaps—may have made them what they are to-day—content and self-satisfied in their degradation, oblivious to the contempt of their peers.

Such had been the case with Henry Jones. A woman—or, rather, two women—had speeded his downfall. Once he had been a man of business, enjoying a prestige and an income that his fellows envied. For a fleeting period—four days, to be precise—fortune had lavished herself upon him. After that, the deluge.

The woman most responsible had been his mother. Henry was but eleven. The business referred to had required a quick eye and powerful lungs. Henry's quick eye had informed him of the proper instant to make a

flying leap for a car that was speeding thunderously along; and then, while old ladies had slowly opened their eyes and tried to breathe normally once again, his leather lungs had advertised his profession:

"Eee—vening pa—pers!"

Henry had confidently looked forward to a net profit of at least a dollar a week. The vastness of that sum would inevitably have resulted in discovery and disaster even had Henry not been detected in the very act.

Henry had boarded a car. As it happened, Henry's mother was already aboard. Also, she had been conversing at the moment with a woman whom she had always been anxious to impress.

"Good heavens!" her companion had ejaculated. "Did you see that child swing on the car? What *can* his mother be thinking of!"

"It is shocking——" Henry's mother had begun and then she had paused.

"E—vening pa—pers," Henry had proclaimed.

It was Henry, and not a case of remarkable resemblance. Not only was the face Henry's, but the cap was Henry's, the coat was Henry's, the knickerbockers——

Mrs. Jones had swallowed hard, thankful that her companion was near-sighted.

Henry, returning from the marts of trade, had been informed that his busi-



"That will do, Henry," replied his mother firmly. "Have you a clean handkerchief?" "Aw, gee whizz!" groaned Henry, with infinite disgust.

ness must be wound up immediately. His demands for a reversal of judgment, though loud and vehement, had been overruled.

"That will do, Henry," his mother had declared. "I certainly shall not permit you to sell papers. Besides, it would interfere with dancing school!"

Perhaps she had had hopes that Henry would regard this last as an appeal to reason. If so, she had been disappointed. Henry's lamentations had increased tenfold. In the next ten minutes, he had registered revolt, cyclonic anger, bitterness, and despair.

"You said I wouldn't have to go again after last year!" he had wailed.

"You promised, you promised!"

This was the fact. One season of keeping Henry faithful to his attendance at Miss Hauptman's class for younger pupils had resulted in victory for his mother, but it had been a Pyrrhic victory. She had been utterly worn out. Besides, there was the question of expense to be considered. Henry had two small sisters, who not only ought to go to dancing school, but who actually wanted to—such being the natural perversity of the feminine nature.

Miss Hauptman had been responsible for the changing of Mrs. Jones' mind. She had insinuated, ever so gracefully, that as Henry was such a *perfect* little dancer—for which Henry would have slain her had he heard and had the power—and as she

needed just one more boy for her advanced class, she would be glad to have him as a nonpaying guest of the same.

No mother could have remained proof to such subtle flattery. Henry might howl to heaven, but he was doomed to its opposite. At eleven, he became a dancing man.

Miss Hauptman's class for advanced pupils opened the first Saturday in December. Saturday morning was marked by guerrilla warfare between Henry and his mother, culminating in a pitched battle that started at one o'clock and lasted a full thirty minutes.

Then, requested to wash his ears once more and to get them clean *this* time,

Henry retired to the bathroom with rumblings of renewed hostilities. He returned with ears that a capitious person might still have criticized, but that his mother, warned by his ferocity of eye, pronounced acceptable.

"Now your finger nails, Henry," she gently reminded.

Her outraged offspring turned upon her. For a pregnant period—fully ten seconds—it seemed as if he must explode. Then his emotion discovered a safety valve in a vocal outburst.

"For good Heaven's sake!" he roared. "If I'm going to wear gloves, what difference does it make?"

"If you wear clothes, what difference does it make if you never take a bath?" demanded his mother, making a commendable effort to evoke reason.

"It don't make any difference. That's what I've always said, isn't it? There's a fellow at school, and his mother sews him up in his union suit every winter, and he don't take any old——"

"Henry—that's not nice!"

"It is!" maintained Henry with heat. "He wears a union suit all winter, and he don't have to take it off when he goes to bed or——"

"That will do, Henry," replied his mother firmly. "Have you a clean handkerchief?"

"Aw, gee whiz!" groaned Henry, with infinite disgust.

But he started upstairs once more, putting each foot down with a vigor that was intended to point his protest and that incidentally shook the stairs.

"Stop this instant!" his mother commanded. "If you don't stop acting so, I'll—I'll scream!"

Henry paused to look back—hopefully, it seemed to his mother.

"You'll wear me out, Henry," she said, descending ignobly to pathos. "Supposing you didn't have any mother. What would you do?"

"Sew myself up in my union suit," he replied, without hesitating. "And

you can just bet one thing—I'd never wash my face or neck again!"

"I don't believe you would," she sighed.

"I wouldn't."

Mrs. Jones set her lips.

"I shall tell your father how you've acted when he comes home to-night," she promised.

It was with this promise in his ears that Henry left home. He was ripe for revolt. A group of his peers, observing him in Sunday knickerbockers with slicked hair, and his destination further advertised by the dancing pumps sticking out of either pocket, greeted him cordially.

"Ho-ho!" they proclaimed. "Going to dancing school!"

Henry glared at them.

"Ho-ho! Pewee Jones is going to dancing school! Give us a dance, Pewee!" they chanted.

Henry's eyes became hunted. "Pewee" was a nickname that he had outgrown and, he had hoped, lived down. Now it was back again. The smoldering blaze within flamed, and he took a threatening step forward.

His peers retreated, still taunting him.

"Henry," commanded a well-known voice from the rear, "don't stop to play. You'll be late."

For a moment Henry threatened to become vocal again. But the futility of trying to impress his viewpoint upon a feminine intelligence had been hammered home to him. He started off at a dogtrot. The taunts pursued him for a while and then died away. Whereupon, he slackened his pace and advanced with that abstraction peculiar to males of his age.

As a result, he narrowly escaped destruction. As he started across the square, a limousine bore down upon him. Inside, seated beside her mother, was a really exquisite little girl; a veritable vision, from the crown of her

goldilocks head to the tips of her tiny blue kid dancing sandals. She leaned forward, her lips slightly parted.

The chauffeur honked his horn. Henry, by a purely instinctive acceleration of his leg muscles, reached a zone of safety, from which he glared sinisterly at the chauffeur. Normally he was a good-looking boy, with singularly mobile features. Now every feature was mobilized to express war upon the chauffeur.

In happier moments, Henry took delight in barely escaping the wheels of gasoline progress. But at that moment he was in no mood for such pleasantries.

The chauffeur grinned, but the little girl caught her breath. To her, Henry registering hate was simply wonderful. In her heart was born that admiration which, the poet tells us, is akin to love.

"Think you're smart with that ol' horn!" Henry mumbled, unaware of the tender emotions he had evoked. "Trying to frighten the life out of a body! I'll show you!" He frowned darkly. "I'll show everybody!" he amended, that his impending demonstration might include all that lived and breathed.

Nevertheless, as the limousine swung up the avenue toward the Women's Clubhouse, where the dancing classes were held, he condescended to gallop after it and swing up to a precarious perch behind.

The limousine crept up to the curbing and stopped. The little girl descended. So did

Henry. She realized how he had come and her admiration deepened. This time he was not oblivious. He swaggered to the hood and examined it with the air of a connoisseur, while she turned toward the clubhouse steps, with her mother.

Henry, having completed his inspection, started to follow her up the steps. When he was halfway up, the clubhouse door swung open suddenly and disgorged a small knickerbockered boy who all but collided with the golden-haired one. She shrank back timidly.

Henry's brows tightened ominously. "Quit your fooling!" he advised the offending youth.

The little girl gave him a fluttering glance, and Henry's heart swelled. He entered and thrust aside other masculine slaves to the dictates of the dance and polite deportment, with a regal dis-



regard for their rights. The inflatus of the moment was upon him; he swelled visibly. And then a shrill voice pricked it:

"Oo-hoo, Henry!"

Henry's swagger departed; his manner became almost furtive. In his distaste for even the brim of the cup his mother had pressed to his lips, he had forgotten its dregs. Now they were before him, in the form of Agnes Filch.

Agnes was twelve, and she overtopped Henry by a head. Somewhere back in the beginning, she had put her brand on him—how he had never fully grasped. All that he knew was that some tie—a tie as formless and as vague as a Scotch marriage and seemingly doubly as binding—leashed him to her.

Now Agnes beamed portentously upon him.

"Miss Hauptman says you can lead

the grand march with me," she confided, with a smile that, meant to be the very essence of all that is ravishing, merely made it plain that Agnes was having her front teeth "corrected" with various attachments of gold wire.

Henry fled to the dressing room and morosely considered his immediate future. He was still considering it when Miss Hauptman's command that he appear came to his ears. He crept forward, like a criminal in chains.

The piano, under the competent fingers of Miss Hauptman's sister, pro-



Henry took his place, theoretically with Agnes on his arm. Actually he was in her custody. The line began to move.

duced a march. Henry took his place, theoretically with Agnes on his arm. Actually he was in her custody. The line began to move, and Henry passed through doors which, to fit his mood, should have borne that famous inscription: "Leave hope behind, all ye that enter here."

Twice the marchers proceeded about the hall, and then, turning obliquely, they advanced, two by two, to pay their devoirs first to Miss Hauptman and then to each other. Afterward, they decorously proceeded to their seats, decorously repeated their devoirs to each other, and indecorously sat down.

"Beatcha that time," announced Agnes, as she dove into her seat.

Henry made no reply. He seated himself in a spirit of concentrated malevolence and sat with his eyes glaring straight ahead, as if he wished the world were his oyster, that he might swallow it at one vengeful gulp.

"What," demanded Agnes, "is the matter with you?"

Henry slued around a combative eye.

"Nothing," he said, with sneering emphasis. A husband, returning home from a harried day at the office and seeking vent for bubbling emotions, would have said it just that way.

"Then don't sit there like a goop," advised Agnes.

Henry swallowed hard.

"You're double anything you call me," he observed. "So you're a double goop."

"I'm not," retorted Agnes comfortably. "If anybody is a goop, it's you."

Miss Hauptman's sister struck the open measures of the waltz. The interruption was opportune. Henry, about to become the creature of impulse with results that would have devastated the decorum of Miss Hauptman's class in dancing and polite deportment, became the puppet of the conventions.

The music subdued, if it did not

soothe, his savage breast. He rose and placed himself before Agnes.

With a bow that, intended to demonstrate courtly grace, actually came nearer to proving Darwin's theory—there is something indescribably ape-like about a small boy as his head slumps and his limp hands slide below his knickerbockered knees in the execution of the bow—Henry signified his intention, if not his desire, to pilot her through what might be termed the waltz with improvisations.

For the improvisations Henry was not to blame. Other little boys infolding the nymphs of their choice would pause to beat the rhythm with tentative foot before launching themselves on the crest of the measure. But such mastery of his fate—or feet—was denied Henry.

Agnes sprang from a stock that was solid not only socially and financially, but physically. Moreover, her father was wont to remark that he could always get the theory of the dance, but that the music sort of confused him. Agnes was her father's daughter; only, she had provided a solution to his problem by not bothering with the theory and by disregarding the music.

No such puerile measures as waiting the pleasure of the rhythm for her. She started off flatfootedly and confidently, and Henry, perforce, also started. Agnes not only had superior height, but the advantage in reach and weight.

"Hey!" he demanded. "Can't you wait a minute? For good Heaven's sake, can't you have some sense?"

No plea of his sufficed. He continued to fight with her, rather than dance. The inevitable happened. A dancing partnership divided against itself is like a house in the same deplorable state. In the present instance, a collision precipitated the fall.

"There!" grunted Henry vengefully, as his feet slipped from under him.

Agnes rose unassisted and undismayed.

"It didn't hurt me a bit," she proclaimed jovially.

Henry, about to comment editorially upon that bit of news, paused to stare. The other couple was composed of Eddie Martin and the new little girl. Her cheeks were crimson; her eyes seemed to implore Henry to forgive her. His anger against Agnes gave way to something akin to amazement. Vague *some-things* stirred within his core.

Though but eleven, Henry was male. It was necessary for Agnes to call his attention to the fact that Miss Hauptman's sister had ceased the beguilement of the piano and that it was meet they return to their seats.

"That new girl bumped into you on purpose," accused Agnes.

"Aw, she did not!"

"She did, too! And you stepped on my foot." She extended a substantial white slipper with a damnatory smudge across it.

"You're another," said Henry absently; his eyes were upon the new girl.

"Ooh!" breathed Agnes. "Wait—until—I—tell—my — mother—what—you—said!"

"Aw, tell her! Be a tattle-tale! It's just like a girl! A girl's no good, anyway. They can't fight——"

"Who wants to fight?"

"Girls and sissies don't," admitted Henry. "But a boy who won't fight isn't worth his salt."

Agnes smiled with a maddening air of superiority.

"I guess I know what I'm talking about," he reiterated, with heat. "That's exactly what my father said. I heard him tell my mother so. 'For good Heaven's sake, let him fight!' he told my mother. 'A boy that can't fight isn't worth his salt!' I guess he knows. I guess I'm worth my salt. I can lick any——"

Henry paused, conscious that the at-

tention of his audience had wavered. He looked at her and then, following her eyes, at Miss Hauptman. The latter was staring stonily at the new little girl.

When they reach years of discretion, young ladies cross their knees and have their pictures in magazines that feature photographs of society. At nine, however, they are supposed to cross their ankles—a fact that the new little girl had forgotten. Rightly interpreting the significance of Miss Hauptman's stare, she hurriedly readjusted her position. As she glanced shamefacedly about, her eyes met Henry's.

It is as the poet has said—one loves through chance, or curiosity, or because one has surprised a glance that reveals possibilities. The sons of Adam of all ages are cast in the same mold. Henry's mood changed swiftly. He became a creature who scowled and smirked without apparent reason. He glanced satirically at small girls; he clapped small boys on the back with hectic joviality; in brief, he behaved as small boys inevitably behave while under the influence of feminine eyes.

Miss Hauptman's glances of displeasure but egged him on. The afternoon waxed and waned, but Henry waxed without thought of waning. Agnes he treated cavalierly, until even her stolid serenity was rippled.

"I don't think you're very nice this afternoon," she observed.

"What do I care?" he demanded, in a tone that intimated the answer.

"I don't want to dance with you," she declared angrily.

"I don't want to dance with you, either," he retorted calmly.

Once again, Miss Hauptman's sister resumed her duties at the piano just in time to save the day. Henry rose and, with an air of bravado, moved toward the golden-haired one. Up to that moment, he had courted her as the male courts at eleven—indirectly, from a dis-

tance. Now something irresistible impelled him to come to closer quarters.

So far from expecting him, she was gazing timidly at Eddie Martin, who approached from another angle. Henry's first bow was lost upon her.

"Hey!" he remonstrated, touching her shin with the toe of his pump.

She turned inquiring eyes upon him.

At the crucial moment, he briefly excused one foot from the business of dancing. At the same instant, Eddie's stinging shin telegraphed the intelligence to his outraged brain—Henry Jones had kicked him.

"Ouch!" he exclaimed, and added in a hoarse whisper, "What did you do that for?"

"Bump into me and I'll lam you in the snoot!" replied Henry austere.

Inevitably he glanced at his partner. In her eyes there glowed an admiration that went to his head like new wine. He all but swaggered through the dance; he undeniably swaggered as they walked to their seats. Even after they



At the crucial moment, he briefly excused one foot from the business of dancing.

Her eyes were blue and they dazzled him. He bowed again, and she rose and demurely curtsied.

"Beat it!" advised Henry, to the surprised and aggrieved Eddie. "Now," he whispered to the goddess from the car, and swung her into the dance.

The baffled Eddie blindly seized the nearest girl and started in pursuit. As Eddie came nearer, Henry realized his intention. Eddie intended to bump them. Henry prepared to resist attack.

sat down, he felt the need of swaggering. But one cannot swagger—physically, at least—while one sits, so he began to swagger vocally, instead.

"He's too fresh," he proclaimed. His brow knit ominously. "I'll show him!" he proclaimed cryptically.

Her eyes continued to give him admiring attention; her ears lent him flattering audience.

"What's your name?" he asked huskily.

"Marjory Moore," she murmured, with a sidelong glance at him.

He breathed audibly.

"I'll uppercut him!" he hissed, between clenched teeth.

Marjory was bewildered, but impressed.

Henry glanced around. Miss Hauptman was engaged in laughing conversation with a group of mothers and aunts, and her back was toward him. He rose.

"Watch how I'll do it," he commanded. "I double up my fists this way——" He illustrated. "This fist is Dynamite and this fist"—he held up his right—"is Sudden Death. I spit on 'em"—he spat—"and then I say, 'One—two—three—go!'"

Henry hunched his shoulders. His fists were held within a few inches of his outthrust jaws. Thus poised, he began to edge sinisterly forward toward an invisible foe.

A smile of amusement rippled through the ranks of the grown-ups. The alert Miss Hauptman turned quickly, almost instinctively, in time to see Henry again illustrate the method of uppercutting an opponent. The angry color flashed into her cheeks and her eyes snapped.

"Master Jones!" she commanded, in biting tones.

Henry hurriedly retrieved his seat.

"Smarties!" he murmured, as the other children sniggered and giggled.

He glanced defiantly around him, and then his eyes returned to Marjory. In her eyes blazed indignation that they should laugh at him.

"Say," he confided, "I've got 'most a hundred cigar bands and I've counted a hundred and forty-seven bald men. You make a cross for every one, and when you get a hundred and fifty bald men, you put them in the ground and three days after you'll find money there." He paused. "I'll give you half," he announced.

Marjory's eyes shone. But before she could reply, the music cut in on her moment. She looked about to see from what quarter a partner would descend upon her.

"Hey!" whispered Henry and bowed again.

Marjory glanced at him almost unbelievably. Every dancing school has it as one of its inviolable rules that small boys must dance with different small girls. Accordingly, each small boy dances as much as possible with the object of his affections and plunges promiscuously into the sea of femininity for a partner at other times.

No small boy dances twice in succession with the same small girl. To do this is to invite the wrath of those who rule.

Marjory was but nine, but she was feminine. She grasped the wondrous significance of the fact that he was going to dance twice with her. She rose quickly, and breathlessly, yet confidently, intrusted her right hand to Dynamite, while Henry put Sudden Death around her waist.

"Now," he commanded, and they were off.

Henry saw Miss Hauptman start toward him, but he skillfully kept the distance of the floor between her and them. And when the dance was over, and with it the class' activities for that day, he dodged through the door and snatched up his cap.

Once outside, he paused and examined her limousine with self-conscious thoroughness until she came. Then he looked up.

Her mother caught his expression and smiled fleetingly.

"Perhaps," she suggested to Marjory, "the little boy would like to ride with you."

Little boy! There had been a time when the phrase would have turned Henry berserk. Now all he did was

to twist his foot noncommittedly for a second before he glanced at Marjory.

"Sure," he agreed huskily.

Once in the limousine, he recovered his swagger. Casting a speculative eye about him, he considered the luxury of the upholstery and the fittings.

"These limoozeens are pretty good ol' things," he condescended. "But I'd rather have a good ol' red-devil racer."

From the rose in the crystal glass his eyes fell to the roses in Marjory's cheeks. He gazed at her and the world faded away. Somewhere outside, a chorus of shrill voices shouted and clamored:

"Look at Pewee—Pewee Jones!"

He did not hear them. Content and self-satisfied in his degradation, Henry had become oblivious to the contempt of his peers.

"When I grow up, I'll have a couple of million dollars and a couple of red-devil racers," he prophesied. "And I'll have a big house with a swimming pool and a gymnasium and a couple of hundred horses and a couple of hundred dogs and a couple of hundred men to keep everything swell."

He paused to catch his breath, while her eyes adored him.

"And you can come and stay as long as you want," he added. "And if anybody don't like it, I'll"—his chin protruded threateningly—"I'll uppercute 'em!"

The limousine dropped the cloud-treading Henry at his front path. He paused for a moment and glanced after it, as it sped away. In that instant, time resolved into an eternity of Saturday afternoons, on each of which he would see her and dance with her and entrance her with tales of the prowess of Dynamite and Sudden Death.

"Henry, come into the house this instant!" commanded his mother.

Instinctively he obeyed.

"What did you do at dancing school?" she demanded.

He looked at her aggrievedly.

"Nothing," he declared. "For good Heaven's sake, what——"

"Don't lie to me," she commanded. "Miss Hauptman has just telephoned me. She says you behaved very badly—that you kicked Eddie Martin and seemed to think that dancing school was the place they taught prize fighting in."

Henry stubbornly considered his shoes.

"I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself! I shan't let you go again, although I realize that's no punishment. Nevertheless, young man, when your father comes home——"

Henry lifted a startled, incredulous face to his mother's.

"Won't let me go again?" he echoed. And then his voice strengthened and deepened. "For good Heaven's sake, just as I was beginning to enjoy myself, you have to go and——"

The sentence trailed off in an inarticulate groan of rage, for his mother, scorning to parley, had passed into the kitchen, shutting the door behind her. Henry regarded the closed door for a moment. Then, with a bellow in which self-pity and thwarted hope found inadequate expression, he proceeded to put Dynamite in one eye and Sudden Death in the other. To this crowning ignominy had his brief career as a dancing man brought him.

For to Henry it was not the kitchen door that had been firmly shut in his face. It was the gate to Eden.



Memoirs of Janet Ann

Containing Extracts from her Diary and a Few Unpublished Manuscripts.

By Lucy Stone Keller

Author of "In the Green," "Home Talent," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

JANET ANN JONES left Littleton for the Atwood Business College when she was fifteen years and two months old. Up until that time, she had been "Jennie Sarah," for Aunts Jennie Elwood and Sarah Hoskins. But she had known since the summer of her twelfth year, when she had found the euphonious "Janet Ann" in a forbidden paper-backed novel, that just as soon as the opportunity offered, the obnoxious "Jennie Sarah" should succumb to "Janet Ann."

From twelve, three years stretches into an infinitely distant future, but Jennie Sarah had treasured the "Janet Ann" in her heart with her characteristic doggedness, and had often repeated to herself in front of the mirror, "Little, lovely Janet Ann!" which had been the last sad words of the paper-backed heroine's handsome lover as he had bent over Janet Ann's coffin.

Jennie Sarah knew well enough that she was not at all lovely, but her imagination conquered all her defects—made her straight brown hair curly and "full of red lights," banished her freckles, shortened her long-bridged nose, lengthened her eyelashes, and set a "tremulous" dimple into her square little chin.

Her Aunt Sarah considered Jennie's rampant imagination as a direct endowment of the devil, and did her conscientious best to curb it. In fact, to all of her aunts, Jennie Sarah possessed but two characteristics—she was "smart for her age" and "just like her father."

Jennie Sarah did not quite know how she might have avoided having the

unrevered Mr. Jones as a father, but from the age of six or thereabouts, she realized that she had made a bitter mistake in her choice of a paternal parent. And the disadvantages of her error increased as she grew older.

If she had been the daughter of a millionaire, or even of Susy Smith's father, a well-to-do grocer, she would not have had to go to the Atwood Business College. She might have gone to Vassar or Wellesley and learned to write glorious books—over the creation of whose heroines she had already wept thousands of tears—which would have made her very rich. And then she would have gone to Europe and Egypt and have had a wonderful romance while on a caravan trip across one of Robert Hichens' deserts, with a dark-eyed prince who would either have killed himself from unrequited love of her, or would have married her and carried her away to a Mediterranean island. She could never decide between these two futures, but her plans always carried her definitely as far as the wonderful romance.

As it was, her five aunts "took up a collection" and sent her to the Atwood Business College, some two hundred miles away. And it was here that the following poems and "fragments," so fraught with life's realities and free from affectation and the superficial, were written. They were found scattered through an old shorthand notebook, following daily lessons; and a comparison of the dates with those in her diary indicates that they were writ-

ten during the weeks following a very bitter estrangement between their author and a certain Mr. Leroy Andrews.

Mr. Leroy Andrews was a clerk in the Atwood Pharmacy; a very estimable young man and of a pleasing and fastidious appearance. It was into his keeping that Janet Ann wholly gave her untutored heart. True enough, she reserved all ideas of matrimony for her foreign prince. But Mr. Andrews was twenty-one years old and a "college man"—having attained his sophomore year before wearying of education—and all the girls in business college marveled openly that Janet Ann had "caught" him. These advantages, together with the thrilling enlightenments of a first love affair, had bound Janet Ann very closely to Mr. Leroy Andrews.

So it was that the estrangement fell like a bolt of fire from a starlit sky. It was due directly to a blue-eyed and golden-haired beauty from Chicago who visited for three weeks in Atwood.

The following slightly melancholy sketches are presented in the same sequence in which they appeared in the shorthand notebook, and with her diary notes of the same date.

Monday Night. My room.

I am alone. I should be studying my abominated shorthand, but the hideous little marks make me ill. If only I could have time to devote to my writing when I am not utterly exhausted. It is strange that my life can hold nothing but disappointments.

To-night I saw Leroy. I was walking with Charles K. on Main Street, and Leroy was with his "latest love."

She looked at me with the hatred of a snake, but I said "hello" most pleasantly, and disarmed her. Leroy's eyes looked ashamed. I cannot feel any hardness toward him. I think my affection for him is more that of a

relative. He will be so disillusioned after a while. Charles K., boy though he is, noticed how disinterested I was. He said:

"You made old Andrews look pretty sheepish, didn't you?"

I pretended I did not know what he meant. I said charitably:

"She is *such* a pretty girl, isn't she?"

"She's pretty, all right, but looks ain't everything," Charles said meaningly.

He pressed my arm, but I removed it, and gave him a rebuking glance. Puppy love sickens me *utterly*. Of course his remark was true. Oh, poor Leroy! After all, yours is the bitterest course.

Charles K. then said:

"Everybody thought he was just crazy about you."

"The idea!" I scoffed. "We were the best of friends—nothing more. His heart is in a pretty face; *mine* is in my future."

I do not suppose that he really understood me. Oh, *why* must I feel so greatly older than my years?

AND YET?

Although I know it's better so

That we should be apart,
I wonder, dear, if you can know
How near it breaks my heart?

2.

Perhaps some time I will not care,
Forget the same as you do,
When days again will seem as fair
As those days when I loved you.

3.

And yet—forget? Ah, no!

SOMETIMES.

But sometimes may there come to you
A sorrow for what might have been;
A loneliness that creeps in through
Your happiness, like unto sin
That, covered o'er, lives on within.



Leroy was with his "latest love."
She looked at me with the hatred of a snake, but I said "hello" most pleasantly, and disarmed her.

Monday Night. At my desk.

Just three months ago to-night I left Atwood for the spring vacation, and Leroy gave me his first letter to read on the train. Oh, little time—yet ages! I copy it here because, well—perhaps for the fickleness of life it mirrors.

MY DARLING JANET ANN: Now did I write first, or not? Let's both write to-morrow night. Please, dear! This town is empty without you. Don't forget your promises. You *know* you can trust me. Can I ever wait a week to see you again?

Your miserable

LEROY.

How like Leroy it is! His "*promises!*"

Charles K. asked to take me to the dance to-morrow. He is very childish,

but I said "yes." How much one does because of "what people will say!"

TO YOU.

I'm reading the old, old letters
That bind me to days gone by
Like tarnished golden fetters,
To days that now dying lie.
Not dead, since I still remember,
In these happy times that are new,
The year when another September
Found me so happy with you.
And in my half-wakened rememb'ring
Of hours so filled with joy,
An unknown sadness creeps in to sing
With a little lilting of coming spring.
For I was only a girl then,
And you were only a boy.

AT MIDNIGHT.

Have you ever been alone at midnight,
With no loved ones near by?

(unfinished.)

Wednesday Night. Very late.

Home from the dance, sleepless. Tonight marks the beginning of my novel. Fragments come to me, unrelated, and after a time I shall put them together. I realize that I am rather young, but when one reads "*Thanatopsis*," it makes one respect youth. The dance was dull. Leroy and his "latest love" were there. She was indeed lovely. But I find no strength of character in her face. Leroy asked me for a dance. I thought it childish to refuse, so I accepted in simple unembarrassment. What a mockery it was! We were silent, and his eyes could not meet mine. His "latest love" looked at us constantly, but she need not have feared. I gave him no opportunity to vindicate himself. He is *so* lovable—but, ah, how weak!

Charles tried to put his arm around me on the way home. He will never do so again. He seemed actually surprised at my attitude. He said:

"Oh, go on! You spooned with Andrews, and you know it."

This was too much. I turned on him angrily and said:

"Leave me! I shall go on home alone! Your language *utterly* sickens me! If you are accustomed to going about with girls who have no self-respect, please choose them in the future."

He laughed, but emptily; I could see he was ill at ease. He walked along, however, *like a gentleman*. I cannot endure him. I suppose other girls my age would think him very nice. Sent my poem, "To You," to the *Ladies Home Helper*.

FIRST FRAGMENT OF NOVEL.

"Good-by," he said coldly. "I suppose the next time I see you, you will

be married to a rich man—and all the rest of it."

Something within her seemed to shrivel up, and a hurt in her heart came to take its place, but she answered, with the same old sarcastic tilt to her little head:

"Perhaps. Who knows? You are so happily married; why shouldn't I be?"

His face reddened, and he spoke loudly:

"Of course I'm happily married! I've got the sweetest little wife in the world, and next spring I'll be about the happiest man in this town, I can tell you that!"

The anger in his first words did not strike her, but as the full significance of what he said last swept upon her, it seemed that every drop of blood in her body left. It was almost more than she could stand, but she told her lie well.

"I am so glad for you," she said softly. "Good-by," and turning with her lithe gracefulness, she left him standing there.

On her way home, a boy caught up with her and handed her a note in a writing she knew too well. Though she continued her way slowly, and even stopped in a store to buy some ribbon, she well knew how anxious she was to see what he had written.

Once inside, she tore it open.

"Dear," it ran, "forgive me yet once more. You anger me so with your don't-care ways that I get beside myself. Oh, if you could only know how I've suffered since—how I've atoned! I see your sweet face every instant. Can I not see you before you go?"

The girl swayed a little and sank into a chair. Shakespeare's lines came to her: "And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."

"Only he hasn't enough faith for it to be unfaithful," she said aloud in a dead voice. "And yet I love him!"

She kept on rocking back and forth. Tears came and ran softly over her cheeks. "Oh, could I only have remained a child!" she cried, and kept on rocking till she fell asleep in the dusk-filled room; and her cousin came into the room to call her to dinner.

Thursday. After school.

In the woods.

Came out here under the glorious trees to be alone and write. How sweet the earthy smells are! Oddly enough, I have sat down on the same log where once before I sat with a then-loved companion. My heart is very full. Understanding, it is true, does not always bring contentment, but it must be a little soul indeed who believes that "ignorance is bliss." I should rather know the truth and face it bravely.

Leroy tried to talk to me to-day in the post office. I smiled at him, but hurried on. He shows plainly that my attitude puzzles him. Mrs. Rose's nephew, a young lawyer, is coming soon for a visit. She says he is very handsome, which means, probably, that he has no depth whatever.

How lonely and quiet it is!

A PROSE POEM.

It is a very lonesome day.

Do you know what I mean when I say
"lonesome?"

Do you, in your happiness, know what
it is

To have a dull ache in your throat,
And a stinging pain in your eyes,
As though they were full of tears,
And yet no tears are there?

Do you know what it means to see the
light

Breaking through the clouds—and not
to care?

To hear a bird give forth a burst of
song—and not to listen?

Do you—— (unfinished.)

AUTUMN IN LIFE.

What is it that hurts so within?
Is it the memory of some sin
That you can never quite forget?
Or the bleak day that will not let
A glimpse of *outward* sunshine in?

2

Perhaps it's because you're all alone,
And the wind seems to know, and moan
With a sad, dismal, funeral sound,
For the dead leaves falling on the
ground.

Sunday. In the silent woods.

Late evening.

I have been with Leroy for the last time. He followed me here. I put aside all his evasions. He tried to pretend he was just walking and happened to find me. But I said:

"I know very well, Leroy, that you saw me cut across the park and walk toward the woods. Why have you followed me?"

"Because I wanted to see you," he said, and his voice was sad. He sat down on the log, unasked.

"What for?" I persisted matter-of-factly.

"Oh, hell!" I note this only to show his mood. "Janet, I just can't stand to not see you any more!"

I laughed with real, though bitter, amusement. I despised, yet loved, him.

"It's just as I've always told you," I said gently. "Men love a pretty face more than all else. It has always been so."

"Oh, Janet!" he said in a queer voice, staring at me.

"Yes," I said. "And I truly hope, Leroy, that you may be happy in the course you have chosen. Of course you *know* that the place you have filled in my heart will always be empty."

His handsome, weak face charged with emotion. He threw out his arms and caught me. I pulled away and stood up in front of him.

"Leroy," I said sternly, yet pitying him, "how dare you try to caress me when you have come straight from kissing Miss Burns?"

"I have *never* kissed her," he denied falsely.

"You have been *seen* kissing her twice—once in the park and once on her aunt's steps," I told him calmly. "At least *I* shall not help you to be any more of a traitor than you are already."

They were harsh words, but true. My voice broke, and he stumbled toward me, but I gestured him away.

"Do not touch me or I shall scream!" I said in such tones that he saw I meant it, and stopped. "You are too weak to even be true to *yourself*," I added pityingly.

His anger flamed.

"You make me sick!" he said inelegantly. "As if you hadn't been kissing Charles King ever since we broke off!"

"Stop!" I said between my teeth. "Leroy, that is false—*utterly*! I only kissed *you* because I cared for you and knew it was *right* to kiss you. Of course I knew that I should go on with my career and never marry you, but just the same our friendship—to *me*—was a beautiful, *sacred* thing, and of course it has hurt me terribly that you weren't worthy. Now," I added gently, "you must go."

He had stared at me with such a peculiar expression of mingled sorrow and bewilderment that I could not send him away in anger. I do not write his last words because I think they are manly or interesting, but because they show both his shallowness and sweetness.

"You take the cake, little Janet," he said in an odd way, "but you're a peach, just the same. Won't you give me *one* more kiss?"

I stood coldly and looked deep into his eyes.

"Cur!" I said, though my heart was

choking me. "And you with a date after church to-night with Miss Burns!"

He looked peculiar and grinned unhappily.

"Have it your own way," he said bitterly, and strode out of sight between the trees.

That is the end. How *utterly* my heart is swept clean of its childish illusions!

SECOND FRAGMENT OF NOVEL.

"Oh, my dear!" he said, though great sobs choked in his throat.

She turned to him impulsively and placed her hands upon his shoulders.

"Do not tempt me further, Harry!" she said pleadingly. "You have made a bitter mistake, and we must both abide by it. You must *never* try to see me again."

He bent closer to her. How she loved him!

"Won't you give me just one kiss to remember?" he begged.

She shrank as though he had struck her.

"Oh, Harry, don't make it any harder! Go, go! You have hurt me bitterly; you must not hurt *her*, too. Go, and *be a man*!"

He flung both his arms about her and pressed her lips so fiercely that her teeth cut them.

"There, that will make me a man," he said harshly, and walked back toward his home.

At her gate, she turned and looked back over the street she had come, and then went up on to the porch. She leaned against the porch, and looked around her. He would be home now, with the pretty wife, whom, though he had married her, he had come to abhor. For a long time she stood there quietly. A star fell rapidly through the sky.

"O little star, help me to forget!" she said, and went inside.



I read Aunt Sarah's letter in the hall. I thought I should burst into atoms of happiness.

Sunday. After church. In bed.

Little journal of my heart, forgive me for neglecting you a whole week. So much has happened. Keith has happened. Last Monday night, when I came home and found him standing there by the hall table, with that awed, mysterious look on his face and my scribble book in his hand, I felt a tremor flash between us. But I reached quickly for my notebook and said haughtily, for we had not been introduced:

"Pardon me, but you have my notebook. I forgot it, and it is *private*."

He handed me the book, open at "A Prose Poem," and said:

"Do forgive me. I chanced on it and opened at this little poem. It was so—so interesting, I couldn't help reading it. I am Keith Norton, and I'm sure you are Miss Jones. My aunt tells me you are a very remarkable young woman."

In my brief, careless glance, I saw that there was great character written in his face, but I went straight upstairs, saying only:

"I am ever so glad your aunt likes me, Mr. Norton. She is a delightful woman."

That was the beginning.

We met again at dinner, and it was

refreshing to hear him talk of great affairs and national matters. He is thirty-one years old, and lives in Burlington, Iowa.

I shall never forget Leroy's face when he saw us together at the church social. Mrs. Rose left us, to pour coffee. Keith and I stood at one side watching the silly little games. Leroy's "latest love" giggled excessively and played kissing games. I suppose Keith noticed Leroy's tense expression, for he said:

"Who is that black-haired chap, Miss Jones?"

"Mr. Andrews," I replied evenly. "He is in love with that pretty girl who is laughing."

"I don't call *her* pretty!" said Keith. "Is that Andrews a nice fellow?"

It was an extraordinary moment. I laughed, and saw Leroy's eyes flash with hurt.

"I'm the oddest person of whom to ask that!" I replied. "Mr. Andrews and I were very near to one another until two weeks ago."

"Oh!" said Keith. "I *do* beg your pardon!"

He asked me to walk outside with him. We walked down Main Street and had ice cream. Altogether, we had a very delightful evening. He was much interested from the first in my writing. His hair is slightly touched with gray at the sides and I wonder that he is not married. Who knows—perhaps—

We have gone walking three times and to the church social and once downtown. With it all, he has been so dignified and manly. I would trust him *anywhere*.

STRIVE ON.

Life is about us—do not grieve.
Forget those base ones who would deceive.

Life is about us—full of hope.
Do not in misery blindly grope.

THIRD FRAGMENT OF NOVEL. THE END.

Esther, very lovely with her brown hair piled high, came out to the veranda with her tall, splendid husband, whose arm was about her. They made a charming picture of complete happiness. Neither of them noticed the man watching them beside the hydrangea bush. The two children who had been romping on the lawn with a beautiful pedigreed dog ran to Esther and fell upon her prettily. Their father lifted them in his arms.

"Who do you love best?" he laughed in his mellow voice.

"Bof of you!" cried the children. "Who do *you* love best?"

"I love your adorable mother more than the whole world, and then——"

But the man by the bush waited to hear no more. He stole softly away, and on his yearning face was the story of a wrecked life.

"Little, lovely Esther!" he mumbled brokenly.

Midnight Sunday. Alone.

Again I come to you, little journal, happily. Keith has gone, but this last week has meant everything to me. My life from now on shall flow in new channels. It would have been so even if my unseen grandmother had lived. For I had decided, before the news came that she had left me money enough to go through college, that nothing should keep me from striving for better things. Keith had opened my eyes.

How wonderful he is! How we have talked together! And always he has shown me such *utter* respect. It is hard to believe that nice, ordinary little Mrs. Rose is his aunt.

Keith was with me when the letter came from Aunt Sarah about grandmother's will. And my poem came back from the *Ladies' Home Helper*, but I expected discouragement at first and

they sent a nice little printed piece of paper saying they were glad to see it and to send more. Keith read the poem and liked it.

Aunt Sarah's envelope had "Jennie Sarah" on it, and Keith saw it. So I told him all—with *utter* frankness. And he *understood*! At last. He said he himself preferred "Janet Ann," and then he asked me, *so* sweetly, if he might call me Janet Ann instead of Miss Jones, and I said simply:

"Why, yes, I'd like to have you, and I will call you Keith."

It seemed we had known one another always.

Then we got home, and I read Aunt Sarah's letter in the hall. I thought I should burst into atoms of happiness. I must have acted like a tiny child. I screamed and laughed and jumped up and down. And Mrs. Rose came running in. She was so glad, she cried. I love her. She may be ordinary, but she is awfully sweet. Keith held both my hands and laughed, too; but I detected a gleam of sadness in his dear eyes. Four years is a long time.

He was with me constantly the last two days—he even walked downtown to meet me on the way home from school. Leroy was always looking out of the window when we went by.

Never shall I forget—never—our parting. He left at nine o'clock, so after dinner we took a little good-by walk. It was moonlight. Lots of people were walking. We passed Leroy several times. He is no more to me than ashes.

"I have had a very wonderful vacation, because of you, little Janet Ann," Keith said, as we turned to come back.

"I am *so* glad," I said simply. "You have brought happiness where was nothing but sadness."

He drew my arm closer to him.

"Bless you!" he said. "Bless you, funny little Janet Ann!"

I thought I should cry out loud and

my lips wouldn't say any more. He looked down at me.

"Why, *child*!" he said in pain.

"I hate so dreadfully to have you go," I said.

He did not say anything. We walked along in a painfully sweet silence.

"And I hate to go, Janet Ann," he finally said. "But next fall you'll go East to college and write famous books and forget all about me."

"You know perfectly well that I shall never forget you in all the world," I said, as steadily as I could.

He looked down at me closely. We were in the shade of the catalpa trees and no one was coming. Suddenly he picked me right up off my feet and kissed me for a long time.

"If you do not forget me, I shall not forget you, little Janet," he whispered.

Then he put me down quickly, and we had to hurry to get back in time for his train. All we said was, "You must write to me, Janet Ann," from him, and "Oh, I *will*!" from me.

At the last, he kissed Mrs. Rose and shook hands with Mr. Rose and then, with the *strangest* look at his aunt, he bent down and kissed me, too.

"Because you're part of the family," he said.

And then he strode off into the night.

I ran upstairs to be alone, and I guess Mrs. Rose thought I had shut my door, for I heard her say:

"Well, he's at least got her mind off that good-for-nothing Andrews. It's a good thing. She'll forget him in a little while, and now the poor, lonesome little thing is as happy as a lark."

I shut my door loudly. Mrs. Jones is sweet and nice, and she is his aunt, but she is far too ordinary to understand a love that never, never forgets.

THE KISS.

Pure, true, and sweet, it lives on my lips.

From it forever my memory sips.

Strategy

By Lyon Mearson

ONCE upon a time there were two young men who loved the same woman—a rich young man and a poor young man. The woman seemed to be undecided as to which one to accept, and therefore, as is the way of women the world over, distributed her favors equally and gave no inkling of her intentions.

If she went to the opera with the rich young man on one night, she went to the movies with the poor young man on the next night. If she went automobiling with one, she went walking in the moonlight with the other. In fact, it was, as the poets have so aptly put it, fifty-fifty. Neither seemed to have the advantage.

Now it came to pass that the young lady's birthday approached, and in the minds of each of the young men was conceived a plan for inclining her in his direction. Each of them knew that it would take a very little thing to turn the balance in his favor, things being so evenly divided. They knew that carefully selected birthday presents might do it—and they selected theirs carefully.

The rich young man decided that now was the time to forget about money and not to send a gorgeous gift, as might have been expected of him. So he sent her a little volume of poems, suitably inscribed—an intimate little thing that he hoped might impress on her how tenderly he thought of her.

The poor young man decided that it was now or never—and he went broke buying her a magnificent gold watch incrustated with jewels.

Both men were timid and, lacking the

courage to propose to her in person, they sent letters of proposal with the gifts.

Two days later, calling upon all the nerve they had, they went to the young woman to receive their answers. As the goddess of fortune would have it, they called at the same time and met the lady together in the drawing-room.

She disposed of them summarily. She told the rich young man she had decided that she would not marry him.

"I could never marry a man who is so parsimonious as to send a dollar birthday present to the woman he hoped to make his wife."

To the poor young man she said: "I could never love a man who is so foolish as to spend all his money on a birthday present."

"And besides," she added. "I have just promised to marry another."

Quite bewildered by this startling turn of events, they were about to withdraw in as good order as was consistent with the circumstances.

"By the way," queried one, "what did this other young man send you?"

"He?" she answered blithely. "Oh, he didn't send me anything. He quite forgot about my birthday."

They withdrew together, reflecting bitterly on the fact that the way to arouse a woman's interest is to neglect her, and the way to attain her love is to pretend not to want it.

Moral: The young man did quite right to neglect her as, judging from the character of the lady in question, it was the last chance she would ever give him to do it.

The Flesh and the Spirit

By E.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

The second installment of a daringly original and absorbingly interesting serial. It is from the pen of a famous and widely read English author, who, in this instance, desires to conceal her identity.

WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED IN THE STORY

After three years of an ideally happy marriage, Zena Hammond sees her husband drown before her eyes, as she sits on the beach at Eaststone. She has just been expounding to her new friend, Doctor Gannaby, her belief that death cannot part two people who love each other—that the soul of the dead will find a way to come back in another form; and even in the first shock of her bereavement, her faith holds firm. She resolves to stay on at the hotel in Eaststone to await her husband's return. Doctor Gannaby, who has fallen desperately in love with her beauty and sweetness, sees that it is useless to argue with her and that he must trust to time to turn her thoughts in other directions. A week after Hammond's death, a newcomer arrives at the hotel, Faux Evermore, a reckless, handsome soldier of fortune, a notorious gambler and rake, and yet a man of great charm and magnetism. He and Gannaby take an instant dislike to each other, and Evermore, seeing Gannaby's devotion to the young widow and learning of Zena's strange belief, decides to try a bold experiment, with the double object of spiting the doctor and winning a rich wife for himself. His room is over Zena's suite, and that night he lets himself down by a rope of sheets, enters her room, and gets hold of her husband's letters, which he has heard her say she keeps by her bedside. Having read them carefully, he replaces them, without waking her. The next morning, he comes to her with the claim that he is her husband in Faux Evermore's body, citing in proof intimate details of the Hammonds' life together. Zena is only too ready to be convinced, and when he suggests that they be remarried that day, to satisfy the conventions of a doubting world, she agrees at once.

CHAPTER VII.

EVERMORE dropped much of his naïve mannerism when there were details set out definitely before him to be accomplished. He did not talk after he drove the car away from the hotel, but he was thinking, quickly and neatly. His thoughts were like slaves and his will their master, always. His will had never failed him. He was what men called a devil; no half-and-half devil, but an out-and-outer. Bumbling any affair in which he had interested himself enough to participate was not his way. And now he was arranging, precisely and effectively, the coming events of the day. Yet he was not so absorbed in this but that he had eyes

for the looks of passers-by in the street. He had become serious, but could feel an enjoyment in these glances that kept him, mentally, hurrahing. They were prophetic of the fun to come. Already these casual people who knew Zena Hammond, possibly, only by sight, and her story by hearsay, were inquisitive and keen. What sport was there not in store when they should return to the hotel that afternoon, as man and wife?

Zena sat by him quietly. It appeared to him vaguely, through the array of his plans, that she was one of those rare women who could be quiet expressively. Like most men accustomed to be pleased, he hated a blank quiet in women, which meant nothing; but that

desirable capacity for silence when one had other matters than babble in hand was vastly different.

She was a great girl.

He was not blind, either, to the admiration in the glances people threw at her. Perhaps they were saying: "What? There's that pretty widow in blue *already*!" but that they appreciated her none the less was patent. Evermore, though he knew it not, was a vain man, and the quality of these looks caused him jubilation.

Up the long hill where the fir trees were set, in their dark, massed, everlasting green, the gray car sailed like a bird. Her power and her suavity were a match. He handled her with pleasure, almost with reverence. When they had crested the hill, they turned their backs on the sea, setting their faces toward Westdown and the first item of the business of the day.

How lightly the girl had considered such business! If only she knew—

She was the kind of woman, Evermore was sure, to be awfully respectable. Ah, well, he was not asking her to forfeit that.

When they had run a little farther, he was saying to himself, "After all, she's standing no risks. I'm not a scoundrel. And a young woman must have a man in her life. She was bound to marry, anyway."

A long stretch of straight road and he was driving what was practically his own car. Glorious! He let the gray out and she roared forward. Oh, she was a darling! It was worth marrying fifty women to get her. Red whipped into his burned cheeks, and his eyes were like two fires, and his lips grinned. There was no traffic on that long, straight stretch of road; no, not a single car or cart; not even a bicycle or a pedestrian. It was all their own. He annexed it joyfully. This was the way for a man to go to his wedding, if he'd simply got to marry.

The flight lasted three minutes and they had eaten up two miles under their whirling wheels. But then came danger signs, crossroads, and a more winding track. As he slowed down reluctantly, he remembered that the girl who was giving him the car, along with her young self, was sitting beside him, still charmingly, expressively mute. He turned to her swiftly and impetuously, crying:

"How did you like that?"

She was rosy and delighted.

"I adored it! I've never been so fast before."

"That's worth knowing," he registered, and, aloud, he asked:

"Used we not to drive so fast?"

"Don't you remember how cautious you were?"

He tried to keep the contempt out of his voice as he replied:

"If you've got a car like this, what I say is let her out. She's a gay sort of lady. Give her her fling."

She was acquiring a way of listening to him as if she were listening to some new voice and seeking in it for notes of the old one. Something in his mode of expression seemed again unfamiliar. Harry Hammond had been a man of speech so careful that it had been almost, to a casual ear, monotonous.

"I love fast driving," she said soberly.

They neared Westdown, and, turning to her, he said, with a partly awkward, partly defiant little laugh:

"You understood, I think, my dear Zena, that for to-day you'll have to be my banker."

She handed her wrist bag to him.

"There's plenty there. Yes, I understood quite well. We can cash a check, too, at the local branch of your bank here, or at the hotel, you remember."

"All the trifles return to me slowly," said Evermore.

Almost greedily, his hand closed upon the little bag. He pulled up the car and

transferred the greater part of the bag's contents to his own pockets. He felt strange, doing this, almost like a man who steals for the first time.

"Absurd!" he told himself.

He asked aloud:

"By the way, are we going to be married in a registry office or a church?"

"Harry! You hate registry offices as much as I do!"

"I did," said Evermore astutely, "but rivers of water have flowed under the bridge since then. I suppose I've changed—don't think so much of the outward form or the means to an end as I did. You must remember that, while you stand just as you did before, I've been through a tremendous upheaval. You'll try to remember that, won't you, dear girl?"

"Oh, Harry! I'm sorry! Of course I remember! But I want to be married again in a church, as we were before."

"Very well," said Evermore obediently.

While he was about the business of buying the license, he left her in the car. In that quiet and timeless street she sat, holding on fast to her love and trust, her confidence, in him. They were steady; but every now and then, some word or action, foreign to her husband, burst upon her with a sort of shock. She looked about that ancient shady street, where every one who moved past appeared at leisure and at peace, and this corner of the world seemed magnificently secure. It was a reassuring place from which to go forth into life again under a new name, and with a big spiritual secret hidden in one's breast. Yet it did not seem to be the right setting for such cataclysmic happenings as were working swiftly to an end. It was too old and conservative and set. Reassurance it could give, like a grandmother, but quick and modern sympathy with a palpitating girl none at all.

Just as she began to be lonely there, to long for this quality to appear, Evermore returned to provide it. He was a little stirred, after all, and as he strode swiftly to her side, his eyes began to speak to hers with no uncertain message. She looked such a pretty girl woman, sitting out there beneath the shadows and the sunlight!

He pressed her hand warmly and secretly, and in a voice of low exaltation, said:

"It's done. Everything's arranged exactly. It's now twelve. At two o'clock, at that church over there, we're going to get married."

"That church? What church? Where?" she cried, reinspired, and leaning forward eagerly.

Leaning over the door of the car, one foot on the step, and not relinquishing her hand, he guided her look in the right direction. Beyond the square at the top of the wide street, above the solid houses, she saw a spire stretching up delicately into the sky. The burning sun caught the gilded weather vane at the top. So this was where, in two hours, she and Harry were to be once more united! There was the sanctity which should permit of their taking up their happy lives again. She smiled as she looked at the spire among the trees.

"The question is," said Evermore, "where shall I take you now?"

"Anywhere will do, won't it?"

"We'll order lunch for two-thirty, and then we'll be off again."

"Where are we going to lunch?"

He looked around, answering;

"At the very best place there is, little girl."

They found Westdown's best hotel. Next to an abbey, it was Westdown's star, reconstructed, almost unspoiled, from a castle that had been ruined almost as far back as the Middle Ages. More age! More grandmotherly peace!



He continued to watch her most appreciatively. Why didn't they have a pretty girl's paddling scene in some of the revues?

Zena sat looking at it while, again, Evermore jumped out, to transact business. He would order a lunch that would please even himself. It would be good fun eating it. It would be some thousand degrees less pitifully terrible than the run of wedding breakfasts or luncheons.

This was undoubtedly the way to get married, if a man must.

He was in fine spirits when he regained the car and headed her out of the town.

They drove along narrowing ways, known to the motorist as secondary roads, on either side of which were yellow-brown harvest fields.

People, men and women, worked in them, toiling simply and busily. Not one of them looked as if he or she had faced any problem other than some immediate one of shoes to buy, of what food could be got to eat. The sight of these simple people, as secure in their quiet minds as Westdown seemed in itself, touched Zena. They also im-

bued her with a courage which she secretly needed, although she would not have said so to the strange, brown, handsome man at her side. She understood that these harvesters worked and lived always on the edge of a catastrophe. An illness, the loss of a fortnight's work, some simple contingency the arising of which would not make richer people even think, and what would keep the roof over their heads? And they worked on calmly and equably, not fearing.

Perhaps they had not time to fear.

Like them, she stood on the brink of some possible cataclysmic happening. That wonderful belief of hers, which Harry had taught her, was fulfilled, and yet it invested her with tremblings, with a longing for reassurance. But, sitting leisurely in her car, with ease to think and probe and bandy doubts, she could not stand upon the edge of her world, off which she would step into the unknown at two-thirty, and look over it with the serenity of the laborers.

If only the man at her side would speak for an instant the thoughts that Harry had had! If only he would show the traits and tricks and the bounteous loving-kindness which she, more than any one, knew so well! But as yet he was all strange. The new body seemed to cloud and enwrap his spirit like a veil of close meshes. Perhaps, as he had hinted, the spirit was obscured, only yet struggling to light.

He was speaking.

"You're thinking?" he said in a questioning tone, confidential and inviting.

She bent her head, not answering.

"Of what?" he asked, leaning closer.

"Of us, of course? Of you and me and a wedding day?"

"Yes," she said gravely.

It was truth.

"Tell me about it," he said, with the air of one humoring a petted child.

That was strange to her again. She had been petted, but gloriously, like a woman; never like a child of silly irresponsibilities and whims. His manner lacked something to her; she could hardly have said what.

She replied, trying to meet him:

"I couldn't tell you, exactly. One doesn't think coherently enough. I am—I am—I am rather ashamed to say that I feel just a little—afraid—of the new you."

"We'll change that, darling," said Evermore.

She nodded again, smiling responsively.

"One can't talk very well in a car," he said in her ear. "At lunch we can say everything we want to. I believe we each of us want to think, and think pretty seriously, about what is happening, don't you?"

That was wise, and he had gained himself a respite before her clear eyes would look into his again and her clear voice ask more questions. Besides, he really did want to think. He had never troubled to learn much of women; if their surface charms had pleased him, that had been enough. But he knew that he was going to study this girl rather more attentively, for to-day at any rate, and what he had already gathered of her during the morning he now wished to piece together into some sort of conclusion in his mind. After all, it was better for a man to understand a little what he had to work upon. So, when he had put his question softly and with an admirable gravity, he looked rather anxiously at her clean-cut little profile, to see if she acquiesced.

It occurred to him by the way, as he glanced, that it was agreeable of her to possess such a clean profile. How he hated smudged lines!

She looked around, and once again her eyes dropped to his mouth, and that queer wish of his to hide it recurred. There was something to be said against

a shaved lip. He set his mouth, braced it in a hurry, wishing that the girl saw less.

She said: "Yes, I'd rather be quiet and think. That's like you, Harry, like you always were. You never misunderstood anything."

"Jove!" said Evermore to himself. "Picked up the right line again that time, didn't I?"

He thought, too, that this Harry had probably been a bit weak over his wife. Women mustn't get into that bad habit of expecting eternally to be "understood." In most cases, there was little or nothing to understand; in the others, far too much. As a daily problem, it couldn't be considered.

He let the car out again.

Presently Zena called upon him to stop. They were at the foot of a hill, overlooking, on the right hand, a little green glade, through which a tiny brook ran like silver. She wanted the car drawn up at the roadside, to get out, go down to that brook, and—paddle!

"God in heaven!" Evermore adjured himself. "What a silly, simple little girl! I've never met anything like it. Or no! I say, perhaps she's awfully wise! Perhaps she's got pretty feet. And perhaps I have met it several times before."

He stopped the car at her behest. This was, after all, her day. A wedding day, even such a one as she imagined this to be—merely a repetition—belonged exclusively to a woman. Taking life through, women, even the prettiest of them, had a poor time. Their royalty was so short. Evermore would not have spoiled a girl's wedding day any more than he would have robbed a hungry dog of a bone. They'd both want it later—the dog the nutriment of the meal, the girl the romance of her one day. Let her have it, Evermore thought generously, as he drew up by the hedge.

To-morrow would be different. He'd

be his own man again to-morrow, and he'd own much more than himself, too. Two houses, he gathered, and twelve thousand a year.

She stood up in the car, preparatory to throwing off her coat, and he took it from her tenderly.

"I'll stay here and smoke and mind the car," he suggested.

"How long can we spare?"

He looked at the watch on his wrist and replied:

"Oh, a good quarter of an hour."

"That lovely baby brook!" she exclaimed, springing down into the road. She dodged around the bonnet like an eager child, and was over the stile in the hedge and away.

Evermore watched her run, in her short white frock. She ran as few girls run, straight and lithely, and her ankles, in white silk, could not have been bettered. She sat down on the green bank, drew up her feet, unlaced her shoes, and pulled off her stockings. She put out little feet, one after the other, and tried the temperature of the water tentatively. Evermore turned in his seat to watch, and suspended the lighting of his inevitable cigarette.

"Jove!" he said keenly. "She is pretty! Harry had taste."

When Zena was standing up, her skirts held out of the water's way, shuddering deliciously, she signed, laughing, for him to come.

He ran down to the brook after her.

When he got down to her, he saw with surprise that in spite of her laughter, there had been tears in her eyes, which she was winking away as the sun dries raindrops. And she said confidentially, stretching out her free hand to him:

"We've been so sad, you and I, for more than a whole long week, that I just want to do any baby little thing, any silly little thing, that I can think of. Are you going to paddle, too?"

"You'll excuse me. No, I want to

sit here and look at you doing baby little things."

She wandered away from him down the tiny stream, while he sat on the bank and lighted his cigarette. He continued to watch her most appreciatively. Why didn't they have a pretty girl's paddling scene in some of the revues? This sylvan business would soon bore him, though.

When Zena came back, she had nothing on which to dry her feet. She had forgotten that part of the affair. It almost seemed as if she looked to him for help, and he remarked, rather cynically, to her mute inquiry:

"No. Nursie doesn't know *what* you'll do now."

There was little doubt but that this Harry had been weak over his wife. He must have fetched and carried—Good Lord! It was going to be funny!

But when Zena stepped out into a warm patch of sunlight and, sitting down, stretched out her white feet to let them dry in the heat, Evermore followed, with that joyful flicker back in his eyes, and, kneeling down, began to dry them with his great silk handkerchief. He caressed them softly, enjoyably. They were so pretty.

"Aren't they cold?" he asked tenderly.

"They're awf'ly happy, thanks."

"Dear little things!" said Evermore.

He wrapped her up in the blue coat himself, when they got back to the car. To a certain extent, he was at one with most men—he rather enjoyed making a baby of a girl now and then. She must, of course, be well worth the trouble and attention; she must be able to arouse the desire to give it. Then there were worse things in the world to do than to kiss her and give her sweets and spend some hours with her, on a fine day, in a good car. Again Evermore was in splendid spirits when they started.

This time they were heading back to Westdown, and a wedding.

Zena was pale when they came in sight once more of that tall spire which stood up above the solid roofs, as if it looked for them down that wide, dust-white road up which they came so fast. Time seemed to fly almost faster than the car. And, now that she was so near to this reunion, the weight of it was upon her, heavily. Supposing—

But no. She could not suppose. There were no doubts.

Only spiritual changes mattered. The body was a possession, a thing, to be governed and to obey. That Harry's spirit had found a strange, dark house, a house that threatened and had ghosts and secrets, what could it matter? As Harry had been an influence, a force for good in the lives of others, so he could take this man and change him and recreate him and make him—just Harry. The simplicity of this was complete, but it was also big; it was, in its way, appalling.

She was afraid. But, in her fear, she must not fail Harry. They would work hand in hand upon this task, as on all the rest. A wicked person, she thought, was just like an untilled field; in spite of him, the weeds grew, but he was not deliberately evil. You took him and helped him to make himself beautiful. Life, which people said was difficult, was easy and simple, worked out straight, on elementary lines, so.

But she had a vague notion, too, that bodies had certain powers. These powers were those of habit. Imagine that a man drank secretly; the poison of drink would be in his veins, in his flesh, obscuring his spirit, as, it seemed to her—though she hardly dared think it—Harry's was obscured. It might take time and battle to clear it.

She knew that she could not have told Gannaby this, nor the Apperlys. These simplicities could not be explained to simple Mrs. Lambert or to

any one else. But she and Harry knew them well. Sitting by her side now, he was struggling to be himself. That he would emerge triumphant she had no doubt. Harry was a master. She was only a little afraid for herself, and ashamed of her fear.

Yet, when they came to the church, she was ready for anything. They were a little early and, leaving the car outside, they went in and sat down in a front seat, waiting for the clergyman. She knelt down to pray, while Evermore sat by carelessly. He felt both impatient and scornful. These women, with their religious fantasies and emotions, were extraordinary, he thought. Did she really imagine, as she knelt there—on a red thing called a hassock which didn't contrast nicely with the color of her motor coat—that Somebody up aloft was hearing what she said and replying agreeably, "And the next thing, madam?"

She was sure to be asking for something. Women always were.

He saw how happy she looked when she rose. A shaft of sun fell through the stained-glass window across her. As a decorative scheme of a sanctified interior, it looked rather fetching; and she sat waiting quite as a credulous child waits to see angels appear.

While they sat there, she removed her gloves and took off her wedding ring and smuggled it into his hand.

"The same ring!" she whispered. "With the same ring! You were thinking of that, weren't you?"

Again fortune favored him kindly in putting such a construction on his omission to buy the gold circlet. He had forgotten. But as his hand closed over the ring, and over her slender fingers with it, he whispered back:

"I shouldn't have dreamed of any other. One husband, one ring."

Two o'clock struck from the clock on the steeple above, and the clergyman came in from the vestry. He beckoned

them, and they rose and walked side by side to the chancel steps. He looked at them remotely, yet as curiously as he had looked at their car outside. They were evidently rich, these good-looking people, and the girl was young. Yet he had understood that she was a widow. He began the service.

In a quarter of an hour, it was all over; they had signed the register, received his stereotyped congratulations, and were walking down the church again. When they reached the car, the bridegroom asked:

"Would you like to drive, Mrs. Evermore?"

"Don't call me that!" She shuddered. "I want to feel Mrs. Harry Hammond always, as I am."

She made him a little cold, angry, even jealous.

"But," he said, with more autocracy in his manner than he had hitherto used, "you'll have to accustom yourself to the new name. It's yours and mine. Didn't we agree we could never explain to people? Don't be a foolish child."

"Surely you understand," she answered rather supplicatingly.

"Of course. Only—harden your heart! What's in a name, after all?"

"There's a good deal in the name of Hammond, isn't there, Harry?"

"Oh, Lord," Evermore thought, "is there? Was this fellow what's called well connected, with hordes of relations and responsibilities and traditions? God save us! Well, child," he asked, pressing her hand, "do you want to drive the wedding coach?"

"I would adore it!"

"Let's see you drive," said Evermore, rather thoughtlessly.

But he covered up the remark by the sudden display of care which he took for her, buttoning the collar button of her coat, and laying the light rug over her knees, and worrying her because she hadn't worn a veil to keep the dust from her hair, saying:

"Don't, don't, *don't* ever let your complexion go! You will always be beautiful, won't you?"

"Am I beautiful now?" she asked with the shy audacity that was part of her.

He laughed.

"I shan't tell you just yet," he teased.

He started the engine, slid into his seat beside her, and watched her correct and delicate manipulations of the driving gear. He leaned back, pulling his hat over to shade his eyes, thinking half sarcastically, very conscious of his share in the usual susceptibilities of men:

"No doubt I'll tell her quite often enough how charming she is."

He had made enough love to be so complete a master of the art that it never bored him. To subjugate love—that, he thought lazily, was to enjoy it. To let love drive you—horror!

Zena drove through the shadowed street out into the square, where the heat blazed unchecked. Facing them was the old hotel. Leaving Evermore to garage the car, she went into a dressing room, seeking for toilet vinegar to cool her sun-flushed face. There was indeed dust on her bright hair, and she shook it out cleverly, with a comb. Looking into the triple mirror at every aspect of herself, she said reluctantly:

"Mrs.—Faux—Evermore."

There was much in a name. One grew to love names. Harry's name, to hundreds—no, to thousands—of people meant somebody who was good and straight, clean and decent, and, above all, a man of a spiritual passion that expended itself in kindness and in love for the poorer world. Faux Evermore? What did Faux Evermore mean to any one?

She did not allow herself to wait and wonder. Morbidity was no vice of hers. She was beginning to look down a very dark lane for the answer to her question when she checked herself

sternly. Was not the man who, to all outside intents, was Faux Evermore now in Harry Hammond's hands?

"I am Mrs. Evermore," she repeated to herself resolutely.

She left her coat in the dressing room and rejoined her husband. A few lunchers, scattered over the great, cool room, were lingering at their tables, but the place had an empty effect. It was so big that bride and bridegroom could be almost solitary. Their own lunch table was set at the other end of the room. It had pink roses on it.

"You are you!" she said, when she saw them. "You didn't forget my roses!"

He had, indeed, remembered that they had been on her dinner table last night, on her breakfast table this morning. They had been different from all the other flowers in the dining room at the Hotel Alexa, and he was not bad at guessing, when he cared to set his wits to work. So again he had been right. Pink roses! A happy touch.

Their fare was simple, the usual fare of a good country hotel, but a waiter was bringing toward them a silvery pail in which, crunching on ice, a green-and-gold bottle lay.

"We must wish ourselves luck," Evermore said, as the champagne flowed out, sparkling.

For a moment she did not answer, and he read her face quickly.

"Surely you like it!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," she said, "I like it. So do you. But don't you remember——"

"Remember what?"

Her eyes contracted a little, cautiously. She thought. Yes, surely he must have forgotten many things, which, presently, as they became again familiar, would refasten themselves on his memory.

"About Jack."

"Jack?"

"Jack Apperly."

"Oh!" Evermore exclaimed. He

brushed his hand over his face and said to himself very heartily, "Jack be damned, coming between me and a good drink!" Aloud he repeated, "Oh-h!" as if some memory were now forming at her reminder.

"You do remember?"

"Partly, I think," said Evermore promptly. "But how little people seem to matter! How little things I used to do and say seem to matter! There's only one thing I know at this moment and that is that a thousand Jacks aren't going to keep me from drinking my wife's health in the only possible liquid."

He chinked his glass against hers and said, "To you, pretty thing!" and drank. His eyes danced at her like two demons.

Zena raised her own glass with a little smile that he knew hid an anxiety.

"To you, Harry!" she murmured, and drank, too.

"We'll talk about Jack afterward—long afterward," Evermore said; "the longer, the better."

"You know best, I suppose," she said slowly. "You always did. You're splendid. Perhaps there'll be—rather a lot of reforming for you to do now, too."

And she was thinking, with a quick leap back into her former fears of the morning: "I'm sure, sure, that Faux Evermore drank; that he was rather—bad." With the inadequacy of her feminine insight and experience, she questioned, "I wonder if Harry feels that, too."

Evermore wondered: "What exactly was this Harry's line? I don't quite like all I hear."

But the notion of himself as a reformer was making him smile broadly. It was rich.

To explain that grin which would break over his burnt face, making his eyes and his teeth gleam, he exclaimed naively:

"Zena, I *am* happy. Aren't you?"

"I'm perfectly happy. Only"—she seized his hand urgently across the table—"you—you'll try to be just Harry? I don't want you altered at all."

"You're asking a great deal," he said, regaining gravity. "I expect you'll have to trust me quite a lot."

"That's never been difficult."

"Meanwhile," he said coaxingly, "have some fruit. You've finished your chicken, haven't you? Waiter! There! Now have some peaches, my dear child. I love to see a pretty girl eating a peach. But you must hold it in your fingers and bite it—so."

He refilled his glass and leaned back, looking at her appreciatively. Time was passing by very pleasantly. It did not hurry, but then time in the country never hurried; the moments droned by like bees humming contentedly toward some flower.

They were quite alone in the room by three o'clock; even the last waiter had gone out discreetly, closing the door. Leaning forward across the table, Evermore said, more coaxingly yet, "Zena!" and he took her face in his hands, drew it nearer him, and kissed her mouth.

That kiss, and his champagne, gave him a big sensation of triumph. What a day's work this had been! Twenty-four hours ago, he had not even spoken to her, had not even seen her, and now he was her husband.

Were there on earth many such slow, crude, prim, unhappy fools as Gan-naby?

That thought took his other thoughts back to the hotel. How long were they going to stay in Eaststone? He had an idea that, while the first hours might prove amusing, the place wasn't really going to turn a very pleasant face to him when he brought this girl back to it. Conceivably, its sentiments aroused, it might raise a big, hostile voice of in-



Gannaby stood there, not speaking, only looking from Zena to Evermore.

qu岸 against him. He knew that, in dealing with the world, everything might be calculated and reckoned upon reliably save the great sway of its sentimentality. There was a strong current of emotion, like a life current, rushing perpetually through it.

"My dear little girl," he said, "how long are we going to stay at Eaststone?"

"Not long," she suggested. "I'd rather go home."

"Let's go," said Evermore, "down to the cottage, just for a few days, by ourselves."

He thought that would give him time to array the minor matters of the fu-

ture; to get to know her a little better, perhaps, and to understand to what level he was expected to attain. This Harry seemed to have been a high-minded kind of brute. That sort of thing would have to be dropped gently, more or less.

A very few days of sylvan solitude at a rural cottage would be quite enough honeymoon. They might finish it in rather more entertaining places.

Zena was pleased with the idea of Mill Village. Curtice should pack to-night, and they would go to-morrow. Would that do?

"That's delightful," said Evermore.

"I wish," she said, "that the Lamberts would know you, that I had some one in the whole earth who would believe and help me to rejoice."

"You'll have to go on rejoicing in secret, my dearest child," he replied, "or be qualified among your friends and servants for a lunatic asylum."

He kissed her hand, and said what a darling she was, and how, if her faith had broken for a single instant, he could never have found her again. He assured her picturesquely:

"On one little circumscribed earth, you can have no idea of the immensity of space outside."

Toward four o'clock, they started back, Zena again behind the steering wheel. She was half reluctant to leave Grandmother Westdown and go back to the fashionable frocks and the amazement of the Hotel Alexa. No one, absolutely no one, there would understand. They would hear of what she had done and cry that she was mad or very horrible. Her sensitiveness began to develop when they had left behind them the last old gray street, and were facing coastward again, with a thread of sea glimmering afar off in front of them.

Much as Zena loved speed, she let the gray car dawdle along back to East-stone. They passed again in procession, on either side, all those ripe fields where the laborers still worked. They were no nearer their possible precipice of fortune, but she had boldly taken the leap down into hers.

While she thought thus, Evermore was watching her from under the down-drawn brim of his hat. He knew what women were, and he guessed that she wasn't utterly unlike all the rest. She could not be so perfectly, confidently controlled but that she felt her thrills and trepidations as others did. She was a very human young girl.

He asked her quietly by and by:

"Do you mind facing the music, after all?"

"Mind!" she declared. "Don't you know I just glory in it with you?"

"Ah, well," said Evermore, "that's very right. This world was made for people to be jolly in, not for the practice meetings of a choral society of scandalmongers."

"That's so like the things you used to say!"

For the last half mile into the town, she let the car out, as if all her reluctance to meet people again had been successfully combated. When they drew up on the wide sweep of gravel before the Hotel Alexa, guests were sitting out on the veranda and in the gardens, drinking tea, and their arrival was much noted. Women murmured: "It's almost scandalous, so soon!" and men, more kindly, shrugged their shoulders and observed: "It's a good thing she can forget, already."

Gannaby was not there, having walked in a state of high disturbance to the smart tea shop; but the little reception clerk, who had a spy-glass and a small fragment of a window overlooking the approach, did not fail to observe them, and she darted out and stood on the step as if for the purpose of sunning herself. She was ready with a little city smile and wide, envious eyes when Zena alighted.

She said respectfully: "It's been a lovely day for your drive, Mrs. Hammond."

Zena went in, nodding kindly. The manager was in the vestibule, and he came forward to add an observation to the reception clerk's:

"Doctor Gannaby has been inquiring if you had returned, madam."

He did not feel this information to be of importance, but his curiosity was aroused, and this might be a perfectly proper and roundabout way of eliciting something from this unconventional young widow. He regarded her blue

coat with a worldly toleration, but with a deep private surprise, too. She had appeared to him so preëminently a woman who would do only right and expected things.

She looked vaguely troubled, hesitated, and turned about to glance back through the open doors, through which Evermore could be seen backing the car on the gravel curve, preparatory to turning for the garage. It was almost as if she wished to appeal to him, the hotel manager thought. He began to regard her attitude rather more judicially. It would be a thousand pities did a man of the Evermore brand arouse any interest in her.

"Is Doctor Gannaby in?" she asked at length.

"Is Doctor Gannaby in?" said the manager, turning to the reception clerk.

"He went out just before tea was served," she replied. "He turned in the direction of the Lily Tea Rooms. Perhaps he was going to look for Mrs. Hammond there."

She went into her office and sat down, and swung her listless foot, her chin in her palm. Enviously her cloudy eyes looked forth. Often she had thought if, instead of waiting for and upon all these rich, gay, chattering people, she could be one of them, how perfect it would be! This Mrs. Hammond had lost a husband, but she could choose from a dozen more, and her heart seemed astonishingly light over her troubles. That must be money. Rich people were so lapped about that they did not feel. And what shoes she wore! Slenderly cut white buckskin things with antique silver buckles! The clerk peered out after them, assimilating their every detail, as Zena, instead of taking the lift, turned to walk upstairs. Talk of walking on air, or velvet, or rose leaves! It was better far to walk on white buckskin of that quality, the watcher mused.

She yearned excitedly to know what

was happening. What impended between the rich young widow and her two men?

The clerk knew that the whole hotel watched with inquisitive eyes, but also that all those eyes had lost the sympathy that they had expressed a week ago. A vulgar woman, of the wealthy traveling type, now came in from the shade of a copper beech and strolled across the vestibule to the little office. She had that odious way of fraternizing with and toadying to hotel employees common to women of her type.

She said: "Well, you poor little thing! You must be half baked, shut up here. Wasn't that Mrs. Hammond who drove up just now?"

The clerk answered, "Yes," confidentially, with a know-all air.

"With a new cavalier?" said the stout woman. "Poor Doctor Gannaby has been simply ferocious all day. What can that girl be thinking of?"

"Don't ask *me*," the clerk said, a little shrilly.

Her interlocutor continued: "Well, I think it's disgusting! Several ladies have spoken to me about it. It's perfectly dreadful, don't you think?"

"I really would rather not express an opinion," said the reception clerk. "I should be very sorry to behave that way myself. That's all I can say."

"Any lady would, I should think," the stout woman replied.

Evermore came in crisply with his suave, swift walk, and his glance fell upon her. It was a naïve, a charming look, but it read her. As if feeling it, she hurried away again, keeping at a distance as she passed him, out to her tea table under the copper beech. She held up her head and threw out her too ample chest as she went.

Evermore's eyes met the clouded ones of the little reception clerk looking out at him, and he shuddered very slightly. His shudder had veiled, but tangible reference to the woman who

had just gone, and the clerk smiled in response.

"She was asking questions about Mrs. Hammond," she announced with an air of virtue.

He advanced to the office and stood in the doorway.

"Was she indeed?" he said blandly. "That is a personal matter to me now. Has Mrs. Evermore gone upstairs?"

"Mrs. Evermore?"

He bowed slightly, smiling.

"Mrs. Hammond is now Mrs. Evermore. I asked, has she gone upstairs?"

"She went up at once," the clerk replied breathlessly.

"Thanks," he said, turning away. But he came back to lean over her desk and say with all his persuasiveness, "I want a favor of you. Doctor Gannaby is dining with us to-night, and we're both anxious to give him the news ourselves. He's quite a friend of Mrs. Evermore's, you see. Do you think you could persuade that mouth of yours to keep tight shut until after dinner to-night? It looks an awfully kind mouth. Will it promise me?" He looked at the tight line of her lips softly.

She nodded.

"Certainly," she replied stiffly, "certainly."

"Thanks so much," said Evermore.

"Guests' private business is their own. I shouldn't have talked about it in any case."

He doubted that, but he professed his admiration.

"I assure you," he said sincerely, "that there aren't many girls like you."

He turned away once more and almost brushed against the hotel manager. Realizing that the fellow had probably been standing there for some minutes, had crept up unobserved in his beastly plausible way, his naïve look changed to one of danger. He was suddenly angry.

"Well?" he asked, turning upon him abruptly.

His brusqueness met a polite stare of apologetic surprise.

"Sir?" the manager murmured, eyebrows raised.

"Did you wish to speak to me?" Evermore demanded.

"Not at all, sir," said the manager. "I was coming to speak to the clerk, here, when you have finished your business. But having been unable to avoid overhearing what you said just now, I should like to congratulate you and Mrs. Evermore very heartily, sir."

Evermore nodded his acknowledgment. How apt, how clever, these fellows were! He was rather appreciative, and his wrath had vanished, when he had reached the lift. It gave way to a grin. In his turn, the hotel manager looked after Evermore amazedly, shrewdly, but very respectfully. There was no smile beneath his twirled mustache, because he had admired Mrs. Hammond and summed up the man. He did not know of the scene enacted at a breakfast table in his dining room that morning; he was far from guessing the work of the night. But he thought, "What a clever rascal!" Because his life was necessarily full of episodes that taught him a very level philosophy, he only decided to deck a suitable bridal table for them. And he would let the matter alone.

"It's not our business," he said over his shoulder to the reception clerk.

He spread his hands vaguely; he shrugged the affair off his shoulders.

CHAPTER VIII.

Evermore reached the suite of rooms which now, he supposed, were conjointly theirs until to-morrow, or such time as they should leave the Hotel Alexa. He could go into the sitting room with proprietorship. Zena had gone through to her bedroom; he could hear her voice and another's—probably that of Curtice, the maid. He sat down

by the window, lighted a cigarette, and listened to those voices whose level flow was now and again cut by a sharp ejaculation.

He thought, "Zena is telling the glad, glad news," and he was right.

On the other side of the door, the two women were facing each other, perturbed, uncertain. Not until she was seated before the dressing table, and the maid had removed her hat and coat and whisked a wide cape of muslin and lace over her shoulders, did Zena really remember that there was something to be told. And when she realized this, and weighed it in her mind, she let Curtice take down her light-brown hair and brush it out vigorously over the protective cape, and heard her exclaim, "How dusty it is, madam!" before she could begin to tell her.

"Yes, Curtice," she said, "it's very dusty. I've been motoring all day."

"I heard you had gone, madam," the maid replied reservedly. "If I had known, I should have reminded you to put on a veil."

"It was a lovely day."

"I hope you had a pleasant drive, madam."

"Thank you, Curtice. It was a very pleasant drive—I think."

Sitting there, with her idle hands clasped about each other in her lap, she examined the maid's prim, pale face in the glass and wondered about it. How would it look when the news was sprung? The conventional servant would be horrified; more, distressed. She would feel that her mistress had impugned her own honor and the maid's respectability at a blow. To Curtice, the scorn of that funny, stout person who had been taking tea out in the garden would be a matter of some weight. Zena Evermore had a very kindly, a very tender, wish not to wound those who were daily with her. She thought most carefully before she went further, and presently she said:

"It was a drive of some importance, Curtice. I had a reason for going which will probably astonish you when you hear it."

"Oh—are you going to tell me, madam?"

"You'll have to hear."

She thought, "Shall I try to explain to her all I *know* has happened? Could she believe it?" But looking at the prim face, narrow of brow and rather set of lip, she decided, "No." Yet she made a little effort.

"Curtice," she said, "you know—people have gossiped, no doubt, and you will have heard from the hotel people—what I believe about my husband's death?"

"Yes, madam," the maid replied pityingly.

"I remember," Zena said, "that I spoke of it to Doctor Gannaby, and he had to reassure the hotel manager about my sanity. People can't imagine these things, Curtice."

"No, madam."

Zena said slowly and with difficulty:

"I was married this morning, Curtice."

The brushing of her hair ceased as if by a death stroke. As slowly as she had spoken, and very consideringly, Zena looked down at her hands. She raised them and examined the nails, her head bent. But at last, hearing a murmur, an uncomfortable murmur, she looked up again, and met once more the pale eyes in the glass. The maid's nebulous face was aghast; over it there crept slowly a flush of dismay. She was hurt, appalled, ashamed at what had been done.

"Madam?" she uttered appealingly.

"I was married to-day, Curtice. I am Mrs. Faux Evermore."

"Indeed, madam?"

"You do not congratulate me, Curtice."

"No, madam," said the maid. "I have not— But perhaps there is

something more which I don't understand——"

The bride answered with some dignity:

"That is more than likely."

"Yes, madam?" said the maid, and waited with brush poised.

Conscious that her revelation of the day's doing had been a direct infraction of the faith she had hinted at, Zena cried:

"If I told you that in—in—Mr. Evermore—I saw my dead husband, what would you think, Curtice?"

"I don't know, madam," said the maid nervously, drawing a little away.

Then, suddenly, Zena laughed. Her maid was one of many people who mattered not at all.

"Brush my hair," she said. "I have no more to tell you. I hope you will stay with me, and I know I am going to be very happy."

"Yes, madam," answered the maid, beginning on her brushing again with a hand that trembled.

Faux Evermore began to sing softly in the other room, a fragment of a song she had never heard before:

"Ah, be gay!
If I had my way,
I'd tell you pretty things,
So you'd long for little wings,
With me to fly away!"

His voice, deep and male, had in it the love call. He had practiced it so often that it rose naturally to his lips, beautiful and fresh and thoughtless. It was spontaneous. He could not help singing, looking out at the hot haze over the sea and thinking of the girl on the other side of the door.

It broke upon the two women with different effect. The maid put down the brush, swung the length of hair quickly into a kind of ropelike coil across her arm, and pulled it into a Greek knot at the right angle. But Zena would have been content to sit

still, listening, a little longer. She was stirred, wildly and happily, at the call, and, hoping to hide from Curtice her bridal ecstasy, she lowered her eyes and kept her mouth from smiling. But she could not arrest the quick flow of warm blood to her cheek. She was lovelier at that moment than the new husband had yet seen her, though he had no chance to know it.

"There, madam!" the maid murmured, standing back from her work.

"Thanks, Curtice. I'll just wash my hands, and then I'll have tea."

The maid went, with her gait of protest and disapproval, across to the washstand. Her very motion of pouring out the warm water and throwing the scented, softening salts into it expressed, as it were, her reluctance to take part in, to set forward by the most remote degree, such an affair. Reading her thus, Zena dismissed her.

When she was alone, she called softly, yet exuberantly, through that closed door:

"Harry! Come in!"

He came, sauntering; still, under his breath, singing.

"See how I answer to my name!" he said, looking at her.

She was drying her hands on a towel. The very everyday, ordinary intimacy of her action suddenly invested her to him with an exciting charm.

"You are a love!" he said, taking her in his arms to kiss her.

She had washed her face, too, in the perfumed water, and he thought that never had he smelled anything so fresh, yet so faint and exotic. He loved the delicate, dainty habits of rich women. They were like rare flowers that grew only in gardens. Over and over again he kissed her.

They went, pressed close together, arm in arm, to the sitting room. Tea had been brought noiselessly, and the servant was just shutting the door behind him when they came through from

the bedroom. He could not resist a look behind to see how they bore themselves, for the whole hotel was agog, scenting a mystery. He saw a very happy girl and a man who looked as if, according to his reckless habit, he had gambled with the whole earth at stake and had won.

"Have you told any one?" Evermore asked Zena.

"I told my maid. She had to know."

"And I told that woman at the reception office, but I said we didn't want it actually shouted out. I suppose the hotel people have got to know."

"I suppose so, since you'll be coming back to me now, at once. Here we are in these dear rooms, just as we were before!"

"Am I going to move my traps in—to-night?"

"Aren't you?" she stammered, opening her eyes.

Evermore's own gaze dropped suddenly before hers.

He rose and went to the window, on a pretext of opening it wider. For a few moments, he stood looking out at beach and sky vaguely, his back to the room. She was serenely pouring out two cups of tea, but a faint, puzzled frown hovered between her brows. Turning, he saw it, and guessed its purport. And he came back and, standing behind her, put his hands on her shoulders and said in a light, guarded voice:

"You're such a nice child. Did you imagine I was going to live another moment away from you if I could help it?"

The frown cleared.

"I know you're not!" she laughed up at him.

He sat down on a cushion at her feet, with a return to his half-jesting manner, and took his teacup.

He looked up at her, his head against her knee, and begged her in song:

"Ah, be gay!
If I had my way,
I'd tell you pretty things,
So you'd long for little wings,
With me to fly away!"

Evermore dressed in the dressing room that had been Harry Hammond's, that night. As he entered it with Zena, she showed him, with a gesture of the hand that embraced all details:

"You see? All your things are as you like them, as you left them. Cur-tice wanted to pack, but—do you think I'd let her? Never! I've had your clothes brushed once——" She looked at him, realizing suddenly, "They won't fit you now."

"Won't they?"

"They won't be big enough."

Evermore had a vain sense of satisfaction that she had said that. If she had said, "They'll be too big——" If this Harry fellow had been bigger than he—— He was gratified, anyway, that it wasn't so.

In reply to her solicitous look, he answered:

"It'll be all right, you know, my dear child. This Evermore wore a certain amount of clothes; in fact, I should say that in his time he'd been to an uncommonly good tailor."

"Oh, of course!" she cried. "I'd forgotten."

"Wear something very nice to-night," said Evermore. "I think I want you to look specially pretty at this little dinner party of ours. And where is it to be—downstairs or up here?"

"Which do you think?"

"You're to decide, naturally. I don't understand whether Gannaby's just joining us for dinner or spending a whole long, happy evening with us. I wonder which it will be," he said, smiling, though he did not wonder at all.

He knew pretty well the course events were bound to take. There was little excitement in that. It was the uncertainty as to their manner of prog-



So they went out together, and under a great William pear tree whiled away the rest of the afternoon.

ress that provided the flavor of sport. It should be a great moment, anyway. It should flame, however tritely it fizzled out afterward.

"I think downstairs," said Zena, after a pause.

"I admire your courage. You're

piano top, an Adonis.

Evermore sang while he dressed. Yes, life was going to be pretty good.

His wife was ready first. Usually he condemned the wearing of white by women; it was insipid, valueless—it was no color. But he observed that

going to face everybody, all at once. Great!"

"I'll wear my nicest white frock," she said, her eyes shining, "and your pearls."

"Yes," said Evermore. "I'd like you to wear those."

She left him, and he began to dress, but not until he had looked at those clothes of Hammond's lying in press and drawer. They were all smaller. The coats, suspended gamantly on hangers, were narrower in the shoulders than his own. The trousers were shorter. The hats—he tried to fit one to his head—were not large enough by a size.

Yes, Harry Hammond must have been a small man, or at least smallish. Evermore was full of half-ashamed, arrogant gladness on confirming this. It was rather good to know that, whatever the unnatural splendor of his moral qualities, he had not been physically a Goliath, nor, from that portrait which occupied the

it was the right thing for Zena. It made her look longer and slenderer than ever, and there was enough color in her hair and eyes and lips to vivify it.

About her neck, which the V-cut corsage of the high dinner gown left just sufficiently bare for good taste in a seaside hotel, were roped pearls. Evermore knew little about jewels, but the milky wealth of those spoke to him; they appealed for what they represented. He had never cherished money, but he loved it, all the same, with the selfish, carnal love a man has for a courtesan. It gratified, and those pearls were a beautiful expression of it. Involuntarily he stretched out his hand.

"Let me look at the pearls," he said. "I'd like to touch them—again."

She came and bent her neck prettily, and he unsnapped a little diamond clasp, and the pearls were in his hand. They formed a long rope, which she wound three times round her neck, and then the lowest row hung on her bosom. What must they not have cost?

Evermore was strangely gratified that she should have them and wear them carelessly, "any old time," he said to himself. He weighed the light things in his hand, admired and respected them. His wife! His pearls!

When he thought of the royal gift with which he was credited, he was seized again with that irreverent desire to laugh, like the desire of a healthy schoolboy in a church when anything is funny enough to cause forbidden mirth. Quickly he held out the pearls again, and again she bent her neck to receive them. When he had fastened that powdery-diamond clasp, he had controlled the wish to laugh.

"Now Mr. and Mrs. Faux Evermore go down to dinner," he said, taking her arm in his hand and looking into her face.

They went out into the corridor and straightaway stepped among other people, also going dinnerward, who gaye

them the coldest of glances, perhaps a shade different in degree. The looks for Zena were partly dismayed, partly surprised, as well as disapproving; for the man, they were glacial. His behavior had aroused the hotel's interest, and his reputation had immediately followed him thither, obliging and obedient to the insistent inquiries of the scandalmongers.

Who was this man? A bankrupt.

Who was this man? A rake, notorious in the Hart-Lovell case.

Who was this man? A hard drinker, rumor said.

The guests at the Hotel Alexa had it all, by the time the Evermores emerged from their rooms on their wedding day.

Several people were converging upon the lift, but somehow others hung away to let the Evermores go first and alone. Such as were acquainted with her answered Zena's nods and smiles and looked away again.

Evermore, holding his wife's arm, entered the lift. The devils were awake in his eyes, and he was smiling.

"You see?" he said almost joyously, for he was at his happiest in any kind of a fight. "You see? We're outcast. Isn't it funny?"

"It isn't even funny," she answered. "It just doesn't matter."

They went into the great, warm vestibule and sat down.

There were yet five minutes to the hour for which Zena had bidden Gannaby. She began to think in what words she would tell him; to ask what he would look like when he heard. And what would he say? There was one thing certain, to be rather thankful for: He would be in no position to proffer advice, to urge careful thought and deliberation. All that was too late. It was splendid that they had thus, at a blow, as it were, put it out of the power of well-meaning people to be exceedingly tiresome.

She turned to her husband confiden-

tially, her air one of delight. She murmured below her breath:

"Do you know what I'm wondering? I'm wondering what'll he reply when I say: 'Dr. Gannaby, I want to introduce you to my husband.'"

"So'm I wondering, a little," said Evermore.

There was the effect of a dark shadow eclipsing the sun when Gannaby suddenly arrived and stood before them.

CHAPTER IX.

Gannaby stood there, not speaking, only looking from Zena to Evermore. He met both pair of eyes—the girl's radiant and steadfast, the man's two flames with a concentrated pin point of deviltry in each—and he began with a leaping heart, guessing. This fellow, having been told of her wealth most probably, had foisted himself somehow upon her acquaintance. Last night she had seen him for the first time; to-day, she had motored with him; and here he was at dinner, looking for all the world as if he had a right to monopolize her kindness. It was a good thing that she had a friend at hand, a stanch friend, a big friend.

"Good evening, Mrs. Hammond," said Gannaby.

"Good evening," she said, offering her hand in a manner rather of friendliness than a formal handshake.

Evermore stood up, and Gannaby faced round upon him.

"Doctor Gannaby," said Zena hurriedly, "let me—let me introduce—Mr. Faux Evermore."

The two men nodded.

"I seem to know your name," the doctor observed curtly.

"Probably," said Evermore.

His ease enraged Gannaby above the mere hateful fact of his presence. He stood like an awkward figure carved in black-and-white stone, the very aloof-

ness and silence of him declaring his antagonism.

Zena felt it, and it troubled her.

"We'll go in to dinner," she said, moving from them. "I'm hungry. Did you know that—Mr. Evermore—and I have been motoring all day?"

"I was told so," Gannaby replied briefly.

She led the way into the dining room, and people looked at her in positive amazement. They noted that not only her good-looking rake, but that doctor, whom she held in leash, followed her, and they spoke of it to one another, under their breath. One or two women, more brazenly disapproving, put up glasses and stared coldly through them.

Zena established Gannaby on her right hand and Evermore on her left. Gannaby felt this trifling circumstance at once, acutely, as an indication of some importance. To him she had allotted the place of honor, as to the greater stranger. Yet twenty-four hours ago, she had not met the other man.

"You see," Evermore said, turning to her, "that they have marked the occasion with an appropriate floral display. My hat! Isn't it wonderful?"

Gannaby saw then that the table was chastely gay with white flowers. It was bridal.

"It looks like a wedding," he said morosely.

"It is a wedding," Zena nodded.

"Our wedding," Evermore added. "My wife was very anxious for your congratulations."

When he saw the other's face, he wiped out all the score against him. It was paid.

For several minutes Gannaby answered not at all. The waiter came and served them, and no one spoke. Then, ignoring Evermore, the doctor leaned toward Zena and asked harshly:

"Mrs. Hammond, what have you done?"

"I have my husband again."

"In God's name, how?" Gannaby asked hoarsely.

She appealed to her husband.

"We're going to tell him, Harry?"

"Harry!" Gannaby exclaimed roughly.

Evermore looked across at him and said:

"My dear sir, your surprise has a little unbalanced you."

"Doctor Gannaby," said Zena, "you know what I believed about my husband's death. It has all come true."

"It has done nothing of the kind!" Gannaby denied with intense force. He brought his fist down on the table. The glasses shivered, and he apologized: "I'm sorry."

"My dear sir," Evermore addressed him again, "I hate to hear my wife contradicted in that fashion."

Gannaby did not reply. A strained smile crept about the corners of his grim lips; and Zena said:

"You'll join us in my sitting room for coffee, won't you? Then I shall tell you everything, all our wonderful story."

A brisker manner suddenly fell upon Gannaby. He looked up, and at each of them in turn.

"Certainly," he said. "Yes, thanks. This is not the place for a conversation of any private nature——"

"I don't think we propose to hold any conversation of that kind," Evermore interposed.

"——and you shall tell me everything, presently," said Gannaby to Zena. "Meanwhile, for—for the polite purpose of this meal to which you were good enough to ask me, may I congratulate you both?"

"Thank you," Zena murmured.

"Thank you so much, Gannaby," said Evermore lightly.

Gannaby ate nothing during that meal; he only played with food and sent it away absolutely untasted. And

he was ghastly quiet. A big, wild passion was working in him, which all his knowledge taught him must be governed. Such passion as that was not safe to let loose. He had himself fairly well in hand when they rose to go to the sitting room upstairs.

"Now!" he said, heaving a long breath.

Evermore returned his look with generous interest.

"You—you've surprised me very much, Mrs. Hammond," said Gannaby.

"Mrs. Hammond has changed her name," Evermore cut in flippantly, strolling to the open window with his hands in his trousers pockets. He stood there, leaning against the frame, looking out at the life below in the summer twilight. The negligence of him maddened the other further. He walked up and down and said:

"I don't understand. Since when have you——"

Again Evermore cut in sweetly, his whole attitude a rollicking swagger:

"Since this afternoon at two."

"Explain!" said Gannaby, regardless of manners, turning on him like a goaded lion. "As one privileged to this lady's friendship, I must ask you!"

"Don't abuse that privilege, sir," replied Evermore.

"My dear Doctor Gannaby," Zena declared, "all that I knew would happen has happened. Sit down, Harry. I shall tell him. I *must* tell him our marvelous story."

And she told Gannaby the marvelous story in the silence of the little sitting room overlooking the sea. He listened through it with a grim face, looking now and again with an unveiled distaste at Evermore, who had yet his trump to play.

When Zena's thrilled voice ceased, neither man uttered a word for a moment or two. Then it was Gannaby who spoke first.

Leaning forward to look into her

face, "Mrs. Hammond," he said urgently, "Heaven knows that if such a thing had happened, I, your friend, though a new friend, would be the first to rejoice for you. *But*—can you think *this* is your husband?"

Evermore interpolated crisply:

"Yes, sir. I am. We were married at two o'clock by special license."

"My God!" Gannaby exclaimed. "Why? Why?"

"To satisfy public opinion," Evermore replied, shrugging.

"Quite so," said the doctor, with a kind of terrible irony. "I beg your pardon!"

"Not at all," replied Evermore, with regained suavity.

Zena remained kind, but she began to show pride.

"You cannot misunderstand. We married again because do you suppose we don't know that the world would be as incredulous as you are? Only he and I know. I am Mrs. Faux Evermore to you all. But I know that I am Harry's wife, as I was before."

"There's nothing that I can do!" said Gannaby, with passion. "You've put it beyond me! I cannot save you!"

He turned to the door.

"Don't go," said Zena. "Let us give you some coffee. Won't you shake hands with Harry?"

Gannaby had a dreadful struggle with himself; it was as if he had to take a wild beast by the throat and master it, but he mastered it. He looked her in the face.

"I want you to be very happy," he said.

He saw the love and rapture in her face; he saw it blooming again, with its care lost.

"Mind you make her happy," he said, turning upon her husband.

"My dear sir," replied Evermore, "I do not need you to tell me how."

Gannaby longed to speak, to cry out from the rage that was in him, the

rage that had more than a touch of self-righteousness—for he was, in some ways, a hideously narrow man—but that was, none the less, sincere. He thirsted to utter accusations of fury and of truth:

"Can't you see, girl, that you've taken to yourself a waster? That this isn't the man you lost? That never, never on this wicked earth, will you make him worth while?"

He swallowed it all, knowing its impotence and its cruelty.

"You forget," Zena said, "that Harry knows me so well. We've had three years together, and we're going to have many more."

"And if you really *must* go——" said Evermore, opening the door.

Unheeding the insult of dismissal, Gannaby took Zena Evermore's hand.

"If you ever want me," he said steadily, "if you ever need a friend for the littlest thing or the biggest thing, remember to call me. Wherever I am, I will come to you. I would give my life to help you over anything, however trivial. You will call to me, won't you?"

She was embarrassed. Her eyes opened widely, and she saw the great devotion she had roused. She began to murmur doubtfully, but Evermore still held the door, and while she hesitated, Gannaby walked out.

Evermore closed the door and came back to his wife.

"I don't wonder men love you," he said, looking at her.

She started. His gaze had an unfamiliar quality, and he remembered that he must go carefully. She was a woman who had been revered.

"Zena," he said, "give me coffee, please. It's like home again. Don't you think we'll go home soon?"

He wondered what "home" would be like.

He took a cup from her hands, and after a pause realized that he was to

wait on her. It was a fact that hardly ever before had Faux Evermore dealt with any women save those who, poor creatures, served and fawned, or, oppositely, toyed blasphemously with life. How good women had bored him! He started up and performed his service assiduously, though perhaps he was amused a little. All the while he was thinking:

"Now for a fine time! A couple of cars, a ripping wife, and twelve thou a year! Now to make it fly! Good old life!"

He put his face close to hers and whispered:

"Gannaby's an old misery, isn't he? He hasn't made you miserable, has he, my dear little girl?"

"Nothing matters," she affirmed positively. "You are you. I'm awfully happy."

"What a dear old life it is!" Evermore said, almost affectionately.

He looked, and passion came into his interest. He wondered—he had a keen and vivid wish to know—what kind of girl, after all, he had married. What did she do with her life? How did she fritter it away? Was she the sort of girl you left at home after the honeymoon, while you wandered at will among other honey pots?

"What are we going to do at this—at Mill Village?" he asked.

"Be lazy, I suppose, before we begin to work again. We haven't finished our holiday, after all. We gave ourselves a whole month."

"Work?" said Evermore thoughtfully.

"We'd planned so much, you remember?"

"Of course. I shall remember."

He looked up at the portrait on the piano top. What had that thin, earnest ascetic planned to do in the way of "work," with twelve thousand a year waiting to be played with?

Suddenly he considered the portrait

as a nuisance. He had ousted it, hadn't he? Why did it still stand there, affirming its plans, imposing them, with its dreadful, exquisite reputation, upon him, the happy-go-lucky, the devil-may-care, the godless? He sprang from Zena's side and swept up the photograph from its place.

"You mustn't keep this in the place of honor now."

"What do you want me to do with it?"

"Burn it. Any old thing."

"Burn it! I won't. But I'll put it away." She took it and dropped it into the drawer of a bureau. Sympathy was in her voice. "Would it—does it hurt you to see it there?"

"It would," said Evermore, after a pause. "It would hurt confoundedly."

She made a murmur of love and compassion.

"You're not really changed, Harry," she said consolingly.

"Oh!" he cried. "Am I not? And, Zena, there's another thing—you're not to call me 'Harry.'"

"But when we're alone——"

He was now jealous; he said insistently:

"No, less than ever! It—it—you must always practice a good habit, you know. No more 'Harry,' please. You know my name. What is it?" He caught her tight in his arms.

"Faux," she said, as if reluctant.

"Then say it again!" he demanded.

"Faux! Now you have it."

He held her and kissed her passionately.

CHAPTER X.

The Evermores drove down to the Dorset cottage the next day, Faux driving Zena in the gray car and the chauffeur following in the big limousine, with Curtice and the luggage. The day was joyous, and the drive just one honeymoon flash of delight. They

lunched from a basket by the wayside, briefly.

Behind the gray car, in the limousine, the servants discussed the situation gravely. Equally with the lady's maid, the chauffeur had hated the comments that had flown about the hotel; penetrating to the garage. While the assembled chauffeurs had washed their cars that morning, the Hammond-Evermore wedding had been the only theme of talk.

Evermore guessed what was going on behind them. He said, with a laugh and a backward jerk of his head:

"How they're pulling us to pieces back there? What do you suppose they're saying?"

She looked at him shyly, eager and silent. Harry Hammond had always seemed to her girl's heart very wonderful, a supremely good, a kind, almost a divine man. But Harry in this splendid body—

There was more intoxication in love than she had thought, hitherto.

Her drive that day was not restless with the uncertainties and tremors of yesterday. She had been in his arms, had tasted the quality and fervor of his caresses; and—somehow, he was different. It was not a little subtle difference, but a forceful, striking one, as if that plunge into the unknown, which she believed so firmly that he had taken, had fired his spiritual qualities and fused them into something more earthly. He took a big male delight in things—in driving this car, in kissing her, indeed just in living. Life seemed all at once full of personal promises, not one passion of altruism. It was light and strong and full of color.

When they reached the village, which gained its name from the disused windmill that still flapped around in the slight breeze, it was afternoon. Directed by her, Evermore skirted the village; and there on the left, a hun-

dred yards up a rich, glowing lane, the cottage stood. For garden, it had a great orchard of mixed fruit trees, which stretched around it on every side, but a wide drive had been made, up which they swept to the front door.

It was such a cottage as romantic fancy dreams of, with jessamine and honeysuckle and roses on the walls and narrow pansy borders close beneath them. About the orchard, where the long grass had been lately scythed, were dispersed seats. Sometimes they were rustic garden seats; sometimes a wooden bench circling a great pear tree; sometimes wooden armchairs of white wicker, cushioned in scarlet or green. There was a deep, wide porch over the front door, and in the recesses of this porch worked a smiling elderly woman in a big white apron of surpassing cleanliness.

"We were so pleased to get your telegram, ma'am," she said, hurrying out as the car drew up.

Then, her eye having assimilated the blue motor coat and hat, she gasped a little, shut her mouth, and her dismay was obvious. No widow's weeds!

And from Zena she looked to the new brown man beside her.

Zena leaned over the door of the car and spoke quietly, but with a pride in her voice that would not brook questions:

"Mrs. Lambert, I signed my wire 'Hammond,' so as not to bewilder you. But I was married again yesterday to this gentleman—Mr. Faux Evermore."

The woman's nice face went red and became blank.

"Yes, ma'am," she said, opening the door of the car with alacrity.

"Is Lambert quite well?" the mistress asked graciously, stepping out.

"Quite well, thank you, ma'am. He's anxious for you to see his conservatory."

"I'm looking forward to it," said Zena. "We'll have tea in the orchard,



Evermore murmured in her ear: "A man's past may be any one's to play with—it's over as far as he is concerned—but don't you think his future might be his own?"

please. Come in, Faux. Benjamin will take the car round presently, won't he?"

They went together into the hall. It was very cool, with a white stone floor and comfortable chairs and a great many pink roses in large bowls. It had brilliant, dainty curtains that recalled the scarlet and green of the wicker chairs outside; and there were some canaries twittering blithely.

"Dear old cottage!" Zena said affec-

tionately. "It looks as nice as ever, doesn't it?"

"As nice as ever," he agreed, looking around.

"Curtice and Benjamin will give the Lamberts all the news," said Zena, taking off her hat and pushing up the thick waves of her hair with her fingers daintily. "I don't think we need trouble to do it."

She went upstairs, and he followed

her, into a bedroom of white walls and chintz and more bowls of pink roses. Opening off it was a dressing room—his, of course. He went through and began to brush his hair, smiling before the mirror. The jost had begun charmingly; this was all splendid.

"Simply tophole!" he said to himself joyously.

Leaning on his elbows over the window sill, he put his head out and looked down into the massed quiet trees. Above, the sky was intensely blue; across the orchard—he could see its roof over the apple-tree tops—was the model garage; and he could hear the leisurely footfalls of Benjamin on the bit of paved yard, where he dusted his cars. The white-aproned woman was carrying tea things out to a table in a nest of wicker seats, also in a leisurely and comfortable way. The place was lazy with August heat. And all people and things about Zena seemed serenely happy.

The cottage made a dear little oasis, episode, breathing space, in life. Evermore could appreciate the part it would play in the future. By and by, no doubt, they would ask amusing people here for the week-ends.

He tapped at his wife's door and put his head into her room.

"Dearest girl," he asked, "help me, remind me, what did we call this place?"

"Sunday," said Zena, "because it's so peaceful."

"Oh, did we?" Evermore exclaimed to himself. "My hat!"

But aloud he observed: "Mrs. Lambert has taken tea out into the orchard."

So they went out together, and under a great William pear tree whiled away the rest of the afternoon.

There were letters for them when they returned to the house, and one or two notes that had been delivered by hand. Zena glanced at those first, smiling.

"People," she said, "always seem to know when we're coming down. It's rather a bother when we want to be quiet, but it's awfully kind, isn't it? Aren't people nice? One really can't help thinking how nice they are."

"Can't one?" Evermore replied dubiously.

She was reading those intimate notes first, and he stood with a small sheaf of letters to Harry Hammond in his hand. They came, no doubt, from people who had missed reading of the drowning fatality in the newspapers; and some were, by the look of them, bills. And were they now his, then? He supposed so, and began to open the envelopes.

On the window seat by an open lattice, Zena sat, reading her letters. Above her head, the canaries began to sing with shrill sweetness, and a big *borzoi*, pushing open the unlatched door with his long, slender nose, walked in and laid his head upon her knee.

She opened Lady Nina Apperly's note first.

"Harry!" she said. "I mean Faux. Oh, must I call you that? Faux dear, Nina and Jack are coming in for coffee to-night. They think we won't want them for dinner on the first evening of our return, but we won't mind them afterward, will we?"

Evermore supposed that he would have to meet these Apperly people sooner or later, and with sufficient cordiality, he acquiesced.

"I suppose," he said, "that people run in and out in the damndest way—I'm sorry—in the country."

"Well, week-end cottagers do, rather, don't they?"

Standing rather near to her, he caught sight of the big, flourishing handwriting that scrawled over the crested page. And he exclaimed, before he could check himself:

"Seem to know that writing. I've seen it before, somewhere."

"Of course," she said in surprise. "It's Nina's."

"What an ass I am!" he recovered. "You said it was, didn't you?"

She picked up her next letter, and he put aside the bills he had opened and went on to the other correspondence. There would be clews here, no doubt, to various matters of which it would be convenient to be cognizant.

He thought a little of that big handwriting. It was "Nina's." Then who was Nina, and where had he read any inscription of hers before, and when?

He sat down in one of the brilliant chintz chairs, and the *borzoi* came over and sniffed at him and laid its long, quiet head upon his knees.

"Good dog!" the man whispered, and he smiled at the *borzoi*, naively, friendly. "I do love a good dog," he said.

In the quiet of that twilight hall, Zena Evermore presently looked up from the last of her correspondence and saw her husband still immersed in reading. There was an anxious stillness, a constraint as of petrified surprise, about him, which she passed unheeding.

"I'm going to dress," she said, laying a hand briefly on his shoulder as she went.

Evermore held her hand and kissed it before he let it go. He looked up at her with a curious, questioning look, on guard; and while it was his first impulse to crush that letter out of sight, away from where her eyes might light on it, he stayed himself in time. He let it remain as he was holding it, clear and open, and without a downward glance, she passed on to the stairs.

The Hammonds, apparently, had observed that excellent habit of entire privacy over correspondence.

When the sound of her feet on the uncarpeted oak stair had died away, he read the letter all over again. It was long, but it had not the fault of ob-

scurity. It placed a certain position before the reader, obviously clear as daylight.

When Evermore had finished that letter for the third time, all through, he folded it and put it away carefully in his pocketbook. His face flushed and his eyes shone.

"My God!" he said to himself, with a kind of malicious elation.

The dog softly licked his hand. Looking down, Evermore met its brown, still eyes, deeper than human. Bending, he took the dog's head between his hands and looked into those eyes, and the *borzoi* suffered his handling gladly, with a slow tail wagging as rhythmic as a cat's purr.

"You're a good dog, you!" said Evermore, half aloud. "Did you put your head on this Harry's knee, and lick his hand same as mine? What?"

The *borzoi* had nothing to say. He continued to wag his tail, merely, and his big, light, watchful eyes regarded the new man with a kind of steadfast question. Evermore put the question aside with a smothered laugh and, rising, stretched himself and yawned. That was a habit of his when most wide awake. He looked at the clock and thought:

"I'd better go and dress, too."

To gain his dressing room, he must pass through his wife's room, and when he had knocked and received permission for the passage, there she was, seated at her dressing table, with the great muslin cape dangling over her shoulders and her brown hair streaming over it. Curtice was ready for the brushing, but when Evermore came in and stood as if wanting to linger for a moment, she slipped past him primly and went out, closing the door behind her without a glance or a sound.

Evermore went and stood close behind his wife, putting his hands on her shoulders and bending forward over

her head as if to look at her very closely in the glass.

"Tell me," he said, "how you manage to find the world perpetually 'nice?'"

"It's so kind," she answered.

"Is it indeed?" said Evermore.

"You've told me so yourself. You've shown me how the world is full of kindness."

"Did I?" said Evermore. "Well—perhaps I did think that—supposing I did—once. I know I've seen a great deal since then. I've seen and heard and felt and read the most surprising things for any believer in the kindness and goodness of the world to see and feel and read."

"The world," she said, putting a hand up to his, "has always been so good to me that there's no wonder I'm grateful to it, is there?"

"I hope you will never know anything else, my dear child," Evermore said very slowly.

"I shall not. Because you're still my Harry, the same as ever, not altered, and we're going to do things together as we always have done, aren't we?"

"Still your Harry," said Evermore, turning away abruptly with his newest of smiles, "not altered, and the same as ever. Kiss me, Zena."

But before she could lift her mouth, he bent and kissed her quickly on her crown of brown hair, and was gone.

In the dressing room he breathed hard for a moment. His eyes flickered and danced. He began to peel off his coat, but before he laid it aside, he took out the pocketbook in which the letter lay and hid it away safely.

"Harry?" he said. "Harry!"

He laughed with anger.

The Apperlys, of whom Evermore already felt he had heard too much, rang the bell at Sunday about nine o'clock. And they entered with a kind of obvious quiet, the brother hurrying

behind the sister in the subdued manner of rather embarrassed sympathy. Lady Nina, third daughter of the Earl of Plymouth, came forward sorrowfully. She was very tall and angular, with an uncompromising gaze, and from the first moment, Evermore felt what a wearying woman she was. And Jack, Plymouth's younger son, looked just an extremely clever rip. But their affection for Zena was a soft, loving element in the heart of each. They weren't going to let her spend her first sad, lonely evening at Sunday all by herself.

The sight of Evermore in possession arrested their progress, somehow. It checked the first flowing words on Lady Nina's lips, and pulled her emotions up short. After she had kissed Zena, gazing all the while over her head at the stranger, she effected a pause that begged, that insisted on an explanation. And Zena, tucking her arm in her friend's, said:

"Come and take that wrap off upstairs. Faux, you'll look after Jack."

Evermore watched the two women going upstairs together, enjoying the contrast between his wife's grace and Lady Nina's angles, before he turned to the red-haired youth who was interestedly regarding him.

"Have a drink?" he said. "Have a liqueur. What liqueur do you like?"

Jack Apperly's glance dropped to the liqueur tray, which had accompanied the coffee, and there was thirst in it. Evermore noted that thirst benevolently.

"Which?" he asked, his hand poised.

"Nothing, thanks. Just coffee," Apperly said.

"Nothing! Sure?"

"I—I don't drink here, you know," Apperly added.

"Ah," said Evermore lightly, "you feel the influence of the place. It's got a bad name, hasn't it? They should have called it something else."

"Ah!" said the Honorable Jack affirmatively. "Are you staying here?"

Evermore grinned a little naively.

"I am," said he.

The Honorable Jack was plainly at a loss. His thoughts could be seen beating about like dogs after birds. First and foremost, plainest among them was:

"I suppose he's some sort of relation."

Evermore replied to this from his love of a sensation. He said politely:

"I've heard of you from Zena. My name's Evermore, Faux Evermore. You may possibly know it. I had the honor of marrying Mrs. Hammond yesterday."

"Indeed," said Jack Apperly slowly. "You must let me congratulate you. It's been—very sudden, hasn't it?"

"In a way, yes," Evermore replied.

He opened his cigar and cigarette case and held it out.

"Won't you sit down? It's awfully good of you and your sister to look in like this. I wonder if Zena allows cigars here?"

"No," said Apperly, "only cigarettes."

He sat down thoughtfully. Evermore held a match to his guest's cigarette and afterward to his own. The hall was only dimly and rosily lighted, but in the upflare of the match the Honorable Jack watched the other man's face. That engaging, joyful grin of his was twitching his lips as if against his will, as if he wanted to be grave and couldn't, finding the joke too good.

And suddenly Apperly found it too good, too. His first feeling had been of shock, of distaste, but he was very young, and the unexpected was always rather a jolly sensation. So he thought.

He laughed.

"I must say you've surprised me!" he cried. "I wonder just what Nina is saying upstairs. They'll talk till midnight over this."

Contradicting that, Zena and Nina came slowly down the stairs together, not talking at all, but looking as if all had been said. Lady Nina came forward and held out her hand to Evermore and looked him severely in the eyes.

"How do you do?" she said; and, in her brother's words, "You two have surprised us tremendously."

"Where are you going to sit?" Evermore asked. "Here in the window seat? It's a gorgeous night, and the orchard smells ripingly."

"Yes," said Lady Nina. "I'll sit over in the window seat with you, because I want to ask you lots of things. We have, I think, very dear mutual friends."

Her smile wasn't vinegar—she was too young yet for that—but it was charged with gunpowder; it looked appallingly explosive. And he thought within himself, roused to some quick attention by her last words:

"The sooner I get her to myself and hear what's in store, the better."

Zena and Jack had sat down together on a high-backed settle, above which only the tops of their two heads appeared. Zena talked in her thrush's voice, and she nearly had two listeners instead of one, for Evermore had to restrain himself from coming over to sit near and listen. For the music of a beautiful speaking voice is one of the most potent of a woman's charms for man.

But he had Lady Nina to think of, and she would not let him go lightly. She was settling herself on that window seat determinedly. He fetched another cushion and would have put it solicitously behind her, but she refused it, saying, "I loathe cushions!" and resting her severely dressed head against the hardness of the high windowsill.

There were red earthen pots of geraniums on that sill. It was a joy.

Evermore would rather have looked at those scarlet velvet flowers than at Lady Nina, but he refrained.

"Thank Heaven I know my job!" he said to himself.

And she began straightway.

"Zena has been telling me about your wedding yesterday. You can't but see, Mr. Evermore, how you must shock all her friends, all the people who knew and admired her and the work she does. If you'd only waited for a while—a six months' engagement would have been quite short—it would have been so much easier for her to explain afterward. But how she'll explain this I can't think."

So Zena had not told Lady Nina of the secret that she believed her marriage held. She had let her think, with the rest of the world, that it was a strange, wanton, whimsical affair, incompatible with the fastidiousness with which her friends credited her. Evermore breathed a sigh of relief when he realized this.

"Need my wife make explanations to any one?" he asked.

"Oh, I think so!" Nina disputed. "You see, with all her work, she is very much admired and loved."

"What is this work?" said Evermore anxiously.

That was a relief, too—to be able to ask a direct question that one was dying to ask, and not to be expected to know the answer without being told.

"Don't you know?" Lady Nina replied. "She and Harry Hammond simply reformed one of the worst slums in London. People who have worked there have told me it was exactly as if Zena just took a broom and swept the place clean. And orphan children—of a certain kind"—said Nina, looking down at her lap severely—"she has some sort of scheme for a number of them; I can't quite tell you how it works. And then, this autumn, she and Harry were to have had an antidrink

crusade in East Poplam—that's her slum. They've done a lot there, but they haven't obliterated drink. Harry had started a boys' club there. What'll happen to it now I don't know." She looked hostilely at Evermore. "You can scarcely take it over," she observed.

"I don't quite see myself," he said back confidentially.

His confidence touched her not at all. He thought what a hard face she had, so clear and right, so definite and unyielding.

"Poor Zena," said she, "if she has to abandon this drink crusade! How disappointed and sorry she will be! But it's not a thing a girl of her age can do alone. Harry was so good over these things. He helped every one."

For a moment her eyes strayed to the settle where her brother's red head rose above the high back. She looked at him regretfully for a moment and sighed.

All at once she leaned forward a little, smiling, but her smile was not pleasant. She spoke abruptly.

"I know your name so very well, Mr. Faux Evermore. As I said, we have dear mutual friends. I am Angel Hart's cousin."

He remembered now where he had seen the big writing—on Angel Hart's little inlaid bureau in her private sitting room, which she called her "nest." Often he had seen Lady Nina's letters lying there.

Evermore's nerves were too well trained to allow him to express involuntarily any violent emotion. But he began to smile naively, and his eyes became like fixed steel on Lady Nina's face.

"She is Mrs. Lovell now, I think," he commented.

"Quite so," said Lady Nina. "She's coming to stay with me here next week. I live here, you know, at a dear little cottage I built near the windmill, and Jack runs down for week-ends. It's

quite dull here. I hope Angel will be able to make a long stay."

"I dare say you have often thought," said Evermore, "as I have done, how small the world is. And I know you and I are not the first to remark that inconvenient fact."

"Inconvenient?" said Nina maliciously. "Do you think it will be so very inconvenient, Mr. Evermore?"

"Not at all," he replied easily. "My wife and I will be going to town, I suppose, directly."

"Angel has never forgiven you," said Lady Nina, showing a little emotion. "She has been shamefully treated."

"There, my dear lady, you are wrong," Evermore denied.

"But——" Nina began.

"I can't discuss Mrs. Lovell, even with her cousin," said Evermore suavely. "I suppose she has arranged her life as she thinks best, and from my point of view, there is no more to be said."

"She was tired of her husband, and no wonder," said Lady Nina. "He was a brute. But that you should leave her to a second brute like Lovell——"

She looked out of the window into the darkness at nothing, and set her lips angrily.

"There are some women," said Evermore slowly, "who could not bear a contented marriage. Risk is the only sport they live for. They must be stimulated all the time. Mrs. Lovell, I am sure, will not impose any distressing permanent relation upon herself."

"If you infer——" Nina began.

"I infer nothing. I think always that the lady is charming."

"We are all aware of that," she said sharply.

He looked at her smilingly, becoming aware that she was one of those people of immensely strong prejudices that cannot on any account be turned. Nothing that he could or would say had the power of changing her mind about

his conduct regarding Angel Lovell. He had been—yet a third brute.

"Queer," he thought sarcastically, "how in the hands of some women all men are brutes!"

He altered the conversation.

"I want to know," he said, in a low voice, "and will you tell me, please—what sort of a man was Harry Hammond?"

She gazed at him in amazement.

"I have told you. A man who lived to do good in the world."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure! No one doubts it for a moment."

"And that is what every one thought of him?"

"Certainly it was. No one could have thought otherwise."

"I think he must have been a very interesting character," said Evermore.

"I don't quite understand your drift."

"I was only thinking," he explained, "that it's an awfully high reputation to live up to."

He looked at her ingeniously, his eyes flickering strangely. She could read him.

"Why?" she asked. "Are you proposing to live up to it?"

"Up to Harry Hammond's standard?" said Evermore. "Not if I know it!"

"It wouldn't be easy for you," Lady Nina answered with intentional asperity.

He said: "Do you know that no one is entirely good or straight or candid? There are public men whom the public worships as models of virtue because the public doesn't know their secrets. Nearly every man has some secret that he couldn't lay bare to the world without losing all he values. It might be his fortune, it might be his friends, or it might be his wife whom he'd lose. And he doesn't risk it."

"Have you a secret?" she inquired distastefully.

"Many," he laughed. "Far too many to keep."

She rose. She was of the order of women who invariably wear around their shoulders a scarf that expresses their feelings. Sometimes it floats; sometimes it's neat; sometimes it's vagrant. When it means finality, it is drawn tight. Lady Nina drew her scarf in, now, till it wrapped her shoulders closely.

And she said, closing the conversation:

"When Angel Lovell comes, I shall give her your news. I shall tell her that you may come down to Sunday any week-end."

She left him angularly and joined the two on the oak settle.

"Jack," she said, in a voice that was at once languid and strident, "we're going home now. We've stumbled, you gather, upon a honeymoon, unawares." Even her love for Zena could not soften the habitual plainness of her speech. "I don't think we'll stay any longer," she said. "Anyway, dearest Zena, we only looked in to see how you are after all this long time. And we find you blooming."

Her eyes and her scarf and the tautness of her long figure all accused, scolded, and wondered.

"My hat's upstairs," she added. "May I ring and have it brought? Thanks so much, dear. When are you coming to see me, you and Mr. Evermore?"

"We're going up to town on Wednesday for some time. We're going to be busy."

"But you must rest now and again in the week-ends. Surely you'll be here every Saturday to Monday? And I have a cousin coming to stay." She looked very resentfully across at Evermore. "Angel Lovell, who has met your husband before."

Mrs. Lambert had now brought her coat, and while he held it out for Lady Nina's long arms, Evermore murmured in her ear:

"A man's past may be any one's to play with—it's over as far as he is concerned—but don't you think his future might be his own?"

"Not if he doesn't deserve a future," she replied ungraciously, and as if careless of who heard her.

She kissed Zena captiously, linked her arm in the red-haired boy's, and went away.

"Will she come often?" said Evermore plaintively.

Zena came up to him with a lithe, swift, caressing motion. He had an idea that he was going to be coaxed to something—that was what those pretty feline blandishments of women always meant—and putting out his arms, he drew her to him and held her close against his breast, looking down into her eyes.

"By Jove!" he said. "I'm rather lucky!"

"Harry——" she began.

"No," he said quickly. "Faux! That's my name."

"Oh!" she sighed. "How I hate it!"

He was suddenly full of jealousy.

"Listen!" he said. "In a month you shall love it! You shall forget that you—that I—ever—had any other!"

She put her arms up round his neck.

"Well, Faux, then. You said you'd remembered about Jack."

"Of course I have," he answered promptly.

"But—from something he said, I thought you'd asked him to drink."

Evermore brushed a hand over his face and allowed himself to look as bewildered as he was.

"Child," he said, "I think you'll have to remind me, after all. I've got a hazy feeling—that's all."

"You remember Jack's failing—how it's been a family scandal? And Lord

Plymouth won't have him at Plymouth, and that's why Nina has him here every week-end. And you've helped him such a lot."

"I have?" Evermore echoed slowly.

He was tickled at that notion. A rake reforming a rake! He looked inquiringly down into her eyes for further amusement.

She answered with bated breath, her eyes so curious that he suddenly wanted to assure her that all was just as she would have it to be:

"You promised Jack, three months ago, that if he'd swear off anything intoxicating for a year, you'd do the same. And it helped him. There are some boys—so weak—like that. He always admired you so; anything you said he listened to."

"It's not I whom he admires," said Evermore slowly. "It's Harry."

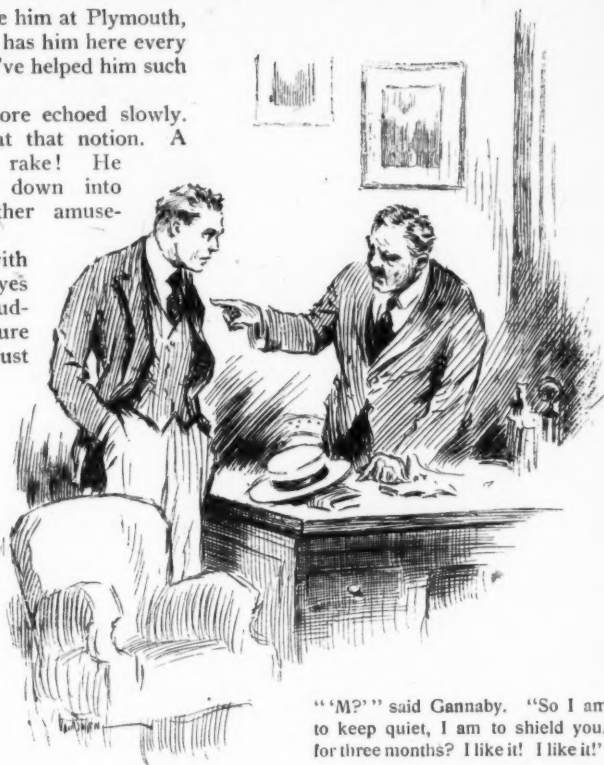
"Well?"

"Well, sweetheart," said the man, bending down to her, "he'll never believe—you know what I mean—that I'm Harry."

"He can believe that you're willing to carry on Harry's work—your own work."

"My God!" said Evermore, very seriously to himself. "This isn't quite the soft job I thought I'd let myself into!"

Suddenly she whispered: "You're not going to repudiate all the things we've done and are going to do together? You're not going to change?"



"M?" said Gannaby. "So I am to keep quiet, I am to shield you, for three months? I like it! I like it!"

You're going to be all I've thought you?"

The quick fear in her eyes, the flush on her cheeks, the extraordinary faith of her, called up what little tenderness he had in him. He found himself, without time for thought, tightening his arms about her and vowing:

"I swear I am! Really! No, I'm not going to fail you. You're about the sweetest thing on earth. I'm going to follow you anywhere. If you want me to help this cub, I'll do it, if—that will do it. Go on believing in me, that's all. I—I—shall get the hang of things again presently. There's one thing I want to ask you."

"My dear! Ask it."

"Let nothing," said Evermore, "ever make you doubt me."

She looked at him silently and smiled. Once more he read her amazing faith. The credulity of it! That such a thing should exist at this time of the world! It was like a pretty picture or a flower garden; it would be a pity to spoil it wantonly. It would be shameful. He half laughed.

He said, with a catch in his breath:

"If—if you're going to ask me to drink lemonade for the rest of my life—well—my God, I believe I'll do it!"

"But not for me only. For—for every one."

"Burn every one!" he thought.

He stroked her hair. It was rather curly and silky and soft like a baby's.

"You're about the dearest, nicest little missionary I've seen."

"You'll have to explain to Jack—tell him, shan't you? What can you tell him, Faux?"

"Let's sleep on it," he said. "And meanwhile, there's that orchard. Is the grass too long for you? It's a heavenly night."

He put a light wrap around her with a sense of responsibility. Even that trifling act came to him rather strangely. Never before had he had to care for man or woman in little things. He had taken what came gayly, but never had he given. He walked out beside his wife to the seat under the great William pear tree.

As he had said, the night was heavenly—so warm and light and sweet with fragrant flower smells. They sat down and, wondering if after all the grass was damp for her thinly shod feet, he put a cushion under them.

He sat back and looked at her. In the moonlight, she was the fairest thing! She was far away from him. He was fighting against a troubling sense of humility, even while passion stirred within him. But stronger than

the humility broke a wave of desire to eliminate, to crush out the fond memories that dwelt in her heart—to be first with her, to ride supreme, to own all. He wanted her to love him for the sheer triumph of it, if for no more.

CHAPTER XI.

A letter awaited Evermore at the house in Cadogan Place when they motored up on Monday morning. He did not know the handwriting, but when he broke the seal, he found that it was from Percival Gannaby, who wrote:

SIR: I had no opportunity at Eaststone to say the things that I want to say to you. Neither had I thought them out. Nor did I know then what I know now, and which makes it imperative that you and I should meet. Either I will call upon you at three o'clock to-day, where I shall wait at your wife's house until I have seen you, or you can call upon me at this address at two-thirty. Yours faithfully,

PERCIVAL GANNABY.

Evermore had a strong desire to let Gannaby come to Cadogan Place to say and do his worst. It could but be his invective against his opponent's cleverness and Zena's faith. But there was something troubling in that phrase: "Nor did I know then what I know now."

Evermore picked up the telephone receiver and looked about him casually for risks. But the servants were carrying luggage upstairs and Zena had gone at once to her room. He was alone in the hall, where he had read the letter on first seeing it. Gannaby was in, and answered the call himself.

"This afternoon at two-thirty," he replied, in his unmusical voice. "Very well. Don't fail, will you? It's rather—what one might call important."

He rang off without waiting for further reply. That was like him.

Evermore went that afternoon immediately after lunch to Gannaby's house in Queen Anne Street. Gannaby

had the moral advantage of him there, in that he stood upon his own ground, in the private room familiar to him and among all the things with which he was supremely at ease. Evermore was the man obeying the order to attend for judgment. Not that he gave so subservient an impression as he entered, at his most casual. He wore light-gray summer clothes, exceedingly well cut, against the neutral hue of which his brown face looked swarthy. His eyes shone, and he rather suggested the watching eagerness of a footballer, playing forward, waiting for the kick-off.

Gannaby was standing up behind his desk, big and ominous. He did not offer a hand, but motioned briefly to a chair.

"You'll sit down?"

"No," said Evermore. "I'll stand, thanks."

They stood facing one another.

Gannaby was never a man to withhold the striking of his big, ponderous blows.

"Well," he said, "Mr. Evermore—that's your name I believe?—you know quite well what we have met to-day to discuss, I have no doubt."

Evermore replied: "I think I know that. But if you ask me why we are to discuss it, you have me beat. For a more useless and unfruitful subject for debate I cannot imagine. In marriage, you should know, there is no going back."

"No!" said Gannaby.

"What are you thinking of, then?" Evermore asked.

"I hardly know, quite," said Gannaby heavily, "but mostly punishment, I am sure."

Evermore half laughed.

"Whose punishment, my dear sir?"

"Yours," said Gannaby. "I've thought very hard since we last met, and I've made up my mind to one thing, and I cannot forego it."

"I'm all attention."

"You must tell your wife," said Gannaby, speaking the last two words with resolution, as if he had nerved himself to accept them in their full meaning.

"The conversation begins interestingly," said Evermore. "It begins rather like a melodrama. 'You must tell your wife!' My God, that conjures up a long, bad story, doesn't it? How shall I begin, and what would you like the story to be?"

Gannaby kept his temper with a huge endeavor.

"The story," he said, "seems to me—fairly complete. I require no additions, and when it is told, I will see to it that there are no eliminations."

"I have no story to tell, other than that which Mrs. Evermore explained to you."

"It almost seems," Gannaby rejoined, "as if I must tell it myself."

"I hope that no consideration for me is keeping that pleasure from you."

Gannaby broke out: "You! You thief! There's no punishment I could mete out that would be heavy enough for you! But what I can do to spoil your infernal game I will! You've married a girl whom any man but the vilest scoundrel must have respected in his own heart, and you married her by the vilest trick man or devil ever thought of! If she still believes in you, it's a miracle; but with women, miracles still happen, and she's not a woman who'll abandon her faith lightly. If I'd known what you were plotting, I'd have stopped it, but I knew too late. When I knew, it was all done—it was over! You took care of that!"

"Pardon me," said Evermore. "I took no precautions whatever. What risks I ran, I ran with pleasure."

He thought: "That's true. Oh, it has been a great game!"

"M," Gannaby uttered queerly.

"But having invited me to your house

for the purpose, I suppose, of discussion," Evermore said lightly, "I hope you will be lucid, my dear sir, and—may I suggest it?—interesting. Frankly, I never allow myself to be badly bored."

And standing there, hands in pockets, he looked at the doctor with his smiling eyes of defiance.

Gannaby gave the impression of leaping swiftly into an opportunity.

"Oh," he cried back, "I am going to be lucid, and I think I may promise—fairly interesting to you! First, I insist that you shall make a full confession to your wife of the trick you've played on her credulity. You took her faith—it was a beautiful faith, though perhaps a silly one, yet faith of any sort is the biggest force in the world to-day—and you turned and twisted it to your ends. You—a scoundrel, a waster—to lift your eyes to her! It's unthinkable! But you've not only thought—you've done it! It was her money you wanted! Oh, you think that isn't plain to every one?"

"Money!" said Evermore, flushing dark red and the light changing in his eyes. "I'll swear it wasn't the money so much as a quite sporting instinct to win."

"To beat me!" Gannaby breathed.

Evermore nodded.

"You challenged me. Well—I've never declined a fight yet. But now it's a finish, and I refuse to discuss my wife with you."

"My God!" said Gannaby, breathless. "You shall pay! You shall confess to her right now—this afternoon. I think I shall come back with you to make sure."

"You be damned!" said Evermore. "I shall say nothing!"

"If you don't do it, I will!"

"What are you going to say? No declaration you can make will alter my wife's conviction."

He looked easy and secure, though

anger showed in his face. But then Gannaby, standing away from him on the other side of his desk, struck his big blow home.

"You mistake. I have something to say—something that would convince the most deceived of women. I can tell her that you got out of your bedroom window, climbed into hers, and——"

Gannaby stopped. He felt a little moisture on his brow and, wiping it off with a cold hand, he resolved to keep quieter. He had been on the verge of a brain storm, in which he might have lost all control and fallen upon the other man like an avalanche.

"So—you—know that?" Evermore uttered, half to himself.

"G-g-got through her bedroom window," said Gannaby, rather vaguely.

Then he stopped again, as if considering. But he was not considering. He was only checked on a thought like a big boulder in the onward rush of his fury, and the thought bruised him. Those words, now that they were spoken aloud, loosed upon the listening air, were full of a horrible suggestion; a suggestion unworthy of her, far, far beneath her; a suggestion of which she must never even hear, full of insult that was like profanity in a temple.

He trampled over it all quickly and rushed on:

"Did she see—did she know——"

"No!" Evermore shouted.

Curious that he had that feeling, too, about the sin of profanity. She was white, white. He was surprised at the sound of his own voice, so sharp and loud after Gannaby's stumbling question.

They looked at each other.

"Of course she did not," said Gannaby, more quietly, "or you would not be her husband to-day. You got into her room, waiting until she was asleep, for the express purpose of reading Hammond's letters, familiarizing yourself with little intimate details of her

life and his, which no outsider could possibly know, so that you might play your part more easily and plausibly. Do you think I don't read you?"

"Oh," said Evermore, "like a book, I admit."

Triumphantly, Gannaby saw him pale under his tan, and the sickness in his eyes, and the taut stringing of all his nerves and muscles, although he did not lower his glance or submit himself in the slightest to his own dilemma. The doctor felt better, and the storm in his brain began a little to subside, because he had got a great blow home.

"Well?" he asked.

"Well?" said Evermore.

"What are you going to do?"

"First," said Evermore, "you must answer a question of mine. Where's your material, sir, for this sensational yarn? What have you been reading lately?"

Gannaby leaned against his desk. It was almost a moment of relaxation for him, after the intensity of those first minutes, when he had been struggling through the vortex of his own passions toward this sound shore where he might meet and grapple with his adversary.

He answered with deliberation:

"I employed the most obvious means—a detective. He learned from a chambermaid that your sheets had been twisted, and she couldn't understand it; and a fisherman, who was out in the bay all night, thought he saw a man hanging out of a second-floor window of the hotel, about one o'clock in the morning."

"It seems as if I should have waited till the moon went in, doesn't it?" Evermore said, with a kind of thoughtful casualness that was in itself almost a jeer.

Gannaby felt the tide of anger swell in him again.

Evermore asked: "Is that the only foundation for your suppositions?"

"No," said Gannaby heavily. "I can

get more of the same kind if you force or provoke me to it. But it was for her sake that I did not spread my inquiries."

Evermore understood that thoroughly. And he knew that not under any penalty would he force or provoke Gannaby to continue those investigations. There would be a scandal—it would be noisome—around Zena. He realized in that moment—gravely, almost resentfully, but irrevocably—how he had committed himself to the rôle of her protector.

"Very well," he said, "we understand each other. What next?"

"I have said," Gannaby replied.

"What you have suggested is actuated simply and solely by revenge," said Evermore. "It's nothing to plume yourself upon. You consider I have hurt you—you want to hurt me. In doing so, you will hurt her also. There lies the position."

Gannaby struck his fist down upon his desk.

"I am actuated by one motive—to get her away from you; to persuade her that contact with one of your sort is impossible!"

"And after?" Evermore asked with clear meaning.

Gannaby did not reply. After? After? His brain was not asking that question so much as answering it. He was very much a man. As strong as his prejudice were his passions.

After?

He was busy, subtly, almost unconsciously, with a panorama of problems, affairs. Separation acts? Divorce laws? Set their machinery going.

And after? Ah, after!

Evermore saw these things working swiftly to their passionate end of love, behind the heavy mask of his face. He felt in him the foretaste of the agony of the fight that was to be. Agony was strange and bitter to him. He had

never known it. He moved restlessly, thinking. He was going to fight.

"Gannaby," he said, "Gannaby, I'm going to keep her. That much is certain. Let it be clear between us. In the eyes of the whole world, you're a better man than I. You're a man of more communal value. You've adopted a career, set up a house, and you want to rear sons to follow after you. That's—isn't it what people call the life force working in you? You're a man of science. You know about this force; you know it's somewhere in all of us. I believe it's in me."

"M?" questioned Gannaby, sneering.

Evermore went on, heedless of the calculated sneer, picking words with unpracticed earnestness:

"I've had a good time. I've enjoyed life, tumbling anyhow about the world. But the world's round, and as you go round and round it, always hating to stop, you come over and over again to where there is a meeting of the roads. I've gone by—where the roads meet—many a time. Now, I've taken a turning. I'm going on to see what happens, for the first time not alone. Yes, I—I'm going on."

"Fine!" Gannaby jeered. "All very fine, that! But here am I. Are you reckoning with me and that confession you've got to make this very afternoon?"

"I don't think it'll be made," said Evermore. "I believe I have the wherewithal to strike a bargain—a compromise—with you, if you really have her happiness at heart, as you say."

Gannaby replied: "I invite you to produce it."

"One moment before I do," said Evermore. "I want to ask you, personally and privately, what sort of a man Mr. Harry Hammond was?"

Gannaby hesitated for some while.

"I only knew him for a fortnight at

Eaststone. But the question is quite irrelevant."

"Oh, not entirely," Evermore denied. "I'll put the question otherwise. What sort of first impression did you form of him? Won't you tell me that?"

"Willingly," said Gannaby darkly. "He was your exact opposite. Begin with that. He appeared to be a kind of born social missionary, living for the good of others. He adored his wife. His wife and his creed summed up life for him. His philanthropies were well known. I was told that he began his study of social problems and evils when he was only twenty-seven. He was over forty when he died, and he's left his monuments behind him."

"He has indeed," Evermore replied.

"What do you mean?" Gannaby exclaimed, turning to him.

"Mostly," said Evermore, in much the same manner, "that every man has a flaw, a work or a secret that is his own and with which he does not astonish the public; and that early follies often dog him to the grave if he's ever been fool enough to take them seriously. In Hammond's case, he took a folly seriously; he allowed it to claw at him and seize him by the coattails whenever the fancy took it. It is a wonder that, with his temperament, he kept it from his—from my wife."

Gannaby listened curiously, inquisitive and astounded. But in Evermore's manner was a quiet, a tolerant certainty that checked the contempt on his lips. He only said, as a protest:

"The man is dead."

"Certainly," said Evermore. "It rests with you to resurrect his ghost. I have no wish to do so."

He was feeling in his breast pocket for a letter; it was the one that had been posted to Sunday, addressed in a writing at once flourishing and uneducated. He handed it to Gannaby.

"Read it!" he said peremptorily.

Gannaby looked first at the envelope and said stiffly:

"I have no right to read Hammond's correspondence."

But something in the other's face compelled him to draw the letter out. He added:

"However, I suppose you, in your new capacity, are dealing with it now?"

Evermore did not wish to reply to that faint sneer, and he let it pass. He was thinking: "The game is mine now, or we can compromise, at any rate." While Gannaby began, with evident repugnance, to read, he was content to await the issues. And he did not reply even to the sudden exclamation that fell from the doctor's lips. He moved away to an armchair and seated himself leisurely.

As Evermore had done, two days ago, Gannaby read that letter through more than once. He looked, as if they could show light, intently at the inscription, at the signature, at the address on the envelope; his brow contracted, and heat crept into his face up to his frowning eyebrows; he tugged at his collar irritably. And there rose between him and that scrawled page the face of a girl, young, fair, and clean, pure and pretty, just as it had risen before Evermore's eyes when he had first sensed that letter. Her proud glance sent the same message to both, a message at once happy and trustful, confident in the integrity of her world. It was a message from eyes that had never known shame, even according to the artificial standard of the present day.

When, for the third time, he had read the three pages in silence, Gannaby lifted his head and looked across at Faux Evermore, and their eyes met squarely over one question, one thought, one interest that they had in common—the letter written by a woman to Harry Hammond.

Again it was Gannaby who was

moved, and mightily; Evermore was quiet. He sat back in the chair, knees crossed, eyes still.

"Good heavens!" said Gannaby at last.

"Give me back the letter," Evermore said, reaching for it. "It will have to be answered."

Gannaby started.

"Who's going to answer it?" he asked quickly.

"I am."

Gannaby heaved a breath of relief.

"She—she's not going to see it, at all?"

"No," Evermore replied slowly, "no, I don't think so."

"She mustn't see it, mustn't ever know! I don't suppose you can have the faintest conception of what such a thing would mean to her."

"And why should you not suppose such a possibility?"

"Well," said Gannaby, "well——"

"You find it impossible," said Evermore, "to credit me with even an insight into the feelings and susceptibilities of decent people? That, I think, is your inference?"

"Your standards——" Gannaby began.

"Oh, cut it off!" said Evermore. "Your opinion, after all, doesn't weigh an ounce with me. I will merely state that I am quite aware of what my wife's feelings would be if I showed her the letter we have been reading."

"She ought never to know," Gannaby repeated.

"I'm quite as good a judge of her susceptibilities as you are," said Evermore coldly, "and I have, furthermore, taken the right to protect them."

"Burn the letter, then, when it's answered," said Gannaby with ill-restrained eagerness.

Evermore put it away into his breast pocket.

"Gannaby," said he, "I'm going to

be frank with you. "I am here to-day to deliver a sort of ultimatum, and it's this: If you insist on my telling my wife, at this early stage of our—our intimacy, of how I attained that—that intimacy; if you say that either you or I myself must show myself to her as a curious sort of unmitigated scoundrel, destroying any dog's chance of forgiveness I might have later; if you want to paint me to her so black——"

"As black as you are!" cried Gannaby.

"If you want to do all this," said Evermore, "why, I think I'm going to whiten myself somewhat in her eyes. And since that can't be done by agreement or statement, perhaps it can be done, to a certain degree, by comparison. If I can say: 'Don't judge me so hardly. Perhaps you're judging all men hardly. Perhaps—how do you know?—this Harry of yours was no more immaculate than I've been——'"

"The man's dead," said Gannaby punctiliously.

At this moment Evermore specially hated that punctiliousness. He sprang up and answered:

"Yes, by God! But that isn't going to cry him off! When a living man fights a dead one, he fights not with one hand, but with both tied behind him, by all the rules of the ring! But that isn't all! I'm going to put up all the fight I know! And this Harry has brought me up already against a pretty tough proposition. I've got enough to do to win, even without you butting in on his side. You stand away, Mr. Second, and hold the basin and the sponge, until you're needed! Harry Hammond and I are in the ring! It's not *your* fight! It's *ours*! And as it is, he's set the rules and calls the times. Leave us alone! There! That's exactly what I mean, no more, no less! It's said!"

He began to walk up and down softly.

Gannaby kept silence.

"Well?" Evermore asked him, by and by.

"Well?" the doctor echoed surlily.

"You see," said Evermore, "I'm playing for time. You understand?"

"Time shall not serve you," answered Gannaby, at white heat.

"That's my affair," said Evermore.

"I've made it mine," said Gannaby.

"Very well," Evermore replied. His eyes flickered into a grin as he turned for the door.

"Stop!" Gannaby called.

Evermore turned at the door, waiting, but he made no step back toward the other. It was as if he had nothing to give, no concession to make, and no pity to extend without its full return. His attitude was, in fact, a reflection of what Gannaby's had been—ruthless, in a cold and stubborn anger.

"I'll make a bargain," he said.

"What is it?" Gannaby asked.

"Three months," Evermore replied.

"M?" said Gannaby. "So I am to keep quiet, I am to shield you, for three months? I like it! I like it!"

He picked up a slim penholder of ivory from the desk and broke it between his fingers. When Evermore heard the tiny snap, he laughed.

"I wouldn't laugh if I were you," said Gannaby.

Evermore ignored this. He turned a smiling face to the other again.

"Don't you wish that penholder were my neck?" he said. "But it isn't. There are you, here am I, still, and we've got to come to some sort of settlement within the next few moments. It's impossible that we could bear each other much longer. I want three months. After that, do what you will, say what you like, or—bargain again. Let's both take three months to think. In return, I'll promise you, since you seem to have the question so much at heart, that my wife will never, if I can help it, hear of the writer of that letter."

"If you break the promise," Gannaby threatened, "I'll speak at once!"

"I shall not break it. It's inviolate—for three months."

"After which," said Gannaby, "I shall deal with you further."

"After which," Evermore replied ironically, "we will resume this conversation. It's something to look forward to, should life pall."

"There's just one point to be raised," said Gannaby, with an air of savage satisfaction, "and that is, haven't you a good deal to gain by withholding that letter? Didn't Hammond's will leave everything to his 'wife?' I've no doubt you've thought of all that? You're playing not only for your wife's good name, but for her fortune."

"That's not exactly the case," said Evermore, laconic again. "I went to Somerset House on my way here and read the Hammond will, and he took the precaution to word it so: 'To Zena Hammond, née Silvester, I bequeath,' and so forth."

"Oh," Gannaby observed sourly.

"I think we have nothing further to discuss?" Evermore asked.

"No. But," said Gannaby, "if you make her unhappy by word or look, in the slightest degree, I—I——"

"My dear sir, I don't need you to tell me how to make my wife happy."

"Very well," said Gannaby.

Evermore asked: "Do we shake hands?"

"No!" said Gannaby.

Evermore went out.

It was nearly four when he reached the house in Cadogan Place again, and as he approached it, he was filled with a funny sense of expectancy, as if he were the most susceptible of young husbands, he told himself, instead of a man already satiated with the sweets and raddled by the poisons of the world. He was triumphant at the gaining of those three months from Gannaby, who hated so to grant them. Three months was a long time in which to prepare a confession that would touch a woman's heart. He kept telling himself that, in spite of the fear that rose, insisting that already he had sinned past forgiveness.

Letting himself into that house of which he was now master, he ran upstairs. On all sides, the beautiful sparseness, the restrained decoration, and the smooth cream walls, where only here and there a great picture was hung perfectly, pleased him exceedingly. Life was indeed life again.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NOVEMBER NUMBER.



"OH, LOVE WILL GO WITH SPRINGTIME"

OH, love will go with springtime,"

You told me with a sigh.

"Love will go when summer goes,"

Bravely then said I.

"Love has been a wonder thing,

And given us fairy gold;

And all the magic soon will fade

And leave us a-cold.

"Oh, love will go with springtime,

Or love will go with fall."

Love held his sides with laughing—

And did not go at all!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

Concerning the Teeth

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

THE teeth cannot strictly be termed a facial feature, nor can they be included among the organs of the body, yet the beauty of any face, however perfect, is marred by an inattractive denture, while the integrity of the entire organism is dependent upon healthy teeth. To one who has failed to follow the progress in modern dentistry, this statement will appear somewhat rash, but oral hygiene has quite recently flashed into the front ranks of the sciences.

"The dental profession," says one of its shining lights, "has never seriously considered in what condition the human mouth is, or what is necessary for its improvement, under the subject of oral hygiene. Since the fearful jolt we have received in the last two years from the medical profession in regard to focal infection in its relation to secondary diseases, I have no fear as to the future in this respect."

Translated into ordinary language, this means that scientific investigators have thrown the searchlight of research into the mouth and have discovered that many conditions of the body, hitherto of obscure origin, have their centers of infection in the mouth; that blind abscesses at the roots of teeth and pus pockets in the gums harbor germs that destroy health and, by the diffusion of

their poisons through the system, so lower the vitality as to give rise to chronic infections of one kind or another that have heretofore baffled diagnosis.

A notable example of this is rheumatism, with its allied manifestations. ("Rheumatism" is a much abused word, and is used here in its popular sense.) Many investigators now believe that the cause of rheumatism lies in the teeth and gums. Certain it is that when diseased foci in the mouth are removed—teeth drawn and gums healed—existing rheumatic affections often disappear, so that painful, chronically inflamed joints here, or a dully aching nerve there, have been healed as if by magic.

Probably no health crusade has ever been given a greater and wider impetus than that of oral hygiene, but the health and beauty of the mouth depend upon much more than toothbrushes, pastes, and powders; indeed, these have, in myriads of instances, laid the foundation for future troubles. It has been proven over and over again that stiff toothbrushes, gritty dentrifices, and the like are a serious menace to the protective covering of the teeth—the enamel—and to the delicate mucous membrane of the gums, while having absolutely no remedial or preventive effect



upon bacteria and consequent putrefactive changes.

So long as the teeth are free from decay and the gums are hard and healthy, no infection can invade them, despite the presence of billions of germs in the mouth. The slightest break, however, in the enamel gives these disease breeders their opportunity.

Now strong teeth and gums cannot be cultivated with toothbrushes and

pastes, as must be obvious to any one. They are often inherited from a long line of sturdy ancestors and then destroyed in a few months, as witness the condition of immigrants after adopting our mode of living and eating! Take the Scandinavian, for instance, who for generations—yes, for centuries—has been accus-

tomed to chewing "*knöck bröd*" and who forgets to masticate our soft white bread. Unaccustomed as he is to the use of a toothbrush, the saliva-free, starchy paste clings to his teeth, and the everpresent germ begins its work. A single cell produces in twenty-four hours, upon a favorable soil, sixteen million offspring, and thirty billion bacteria weigh only 1-40 of a grain. The destruction that occurs so rapidly and that sends consternation into the

heart of the unfortunate immigrant is, then, readily explained. The effect is the same with us, although our teeth are seldom anything to boast of to begin with, so the change from good to bad is not so noticeable.

That sound teeth are dependent first upon proper food—especially grains as nature intended us to use them—has been pointed out in these articles again and again; and that parents are responsible to their offspring for the health and beauty conditions thrust upon them has also been pointed out. In a recent address by Doctor Harvey W. Wiley on "*The Rights of Being Well-Born*," he said:

"In nature, the parent is nothing—everything is for the child; and if sufficient nourishment is not



Pack the teeth with prepared chalk.

provided for both, the mother herself suffers and nature conserves the new being. Thus we find decay and diseases of the teeth more prevalent during pregnancy. The old saying—'A tooth for a child'—is untrue and unnecessary if we have a properly balanced ration. . . . What do you eat to-day? I don't know exactly. . . . You can't buy real cornmeal now. What you get is a devitalized, demineralized, degerminated cornmeal. Out of a bushel of



Remove foreign matter with a rubber band.

wheat, the miller returns you bolted white flour with the bran and middlings removed, and you have thrown away sixteen pounds of its most valuable properties. Three-quarters of the qualities that build up teeth and bone are gone. . . . To feed a child sugar is to murder it. You don't have to fight a sweet tooth in children unless you cultivate it."

But parents are not guilty of these sins of omission and commission because they choose to be, but through ignorance, and for this the dental and medical professions are to blame, since to whom should we look for enlightenment if not to them?

The simple explanation that follows will surely go far toward preserving the teeth of those who read and profit by it. In most of us, the mucous membrane of the mouth is always in a state of mild inflammation as a result of our perverted methods of preparing food. Dental caries is not a disease—it is a putrefaction, a chemico-parasitic process; and it is the accumulation of carbohydrate food debris in and about the teeth that is directly responsible for it. (The ingestion of these foods is remotely responsible.) The

splitting up of these carbohydrates—sugars and starches—into acids by bacteria furnishes the attacking agent. Now the normal mouth is fairly well protected by nature; it is richly supplied with blood and with salivary glands. Vigorous chewing increases both the circulation of blood and the flow of saliva. But while a normal healthy adult should produce 1 c. c. of saliva *per minute*,

and increase this markedly during mastication, there are many in whom so high a percentage is not forthcoming and in whom, furthermore, the saliva is not as active as it should be.

Immunity from dental caries depends on teeth free from imperfections and on freely flowing saliva. It will be observed that teeth well perserved into maturity are always freely bathed with the natural fluids of the mouth. Now the normal reaction of saliva is slightly alkaline, and it goes without saying that whatever interferes with this injures the structures of the mouth. Carbohydrate food ranks first. The action of saliva upon such material is to convert it into sugar and prepare it for the acid medium of the stomach. A free flow of saliva washes the teeth clean of food particles, but when they are allowed to remain upon and between the teeth, they invite disaster. For the same reason, starch added to a tooth paste is whipping the devil with Beelzebub, as it is an easily convertible carbohydrate. In this connection, a distinguished British physician tells an amusing little story:

"A lady, the wife of a medical practitioner, who had been boasting proudly

that her little girl's teeth were always cleaned before bedtime, admitted that the child was allowed a biscuit to eat after she had been put to bed!"

What, then, are the imperative factors toward maintaining the mucous membranes of the mouth and the teeth in a healthy state? Less carbohydrates—starch and sugar—that the alkalinity of the secretions may be insured; more hard and dry food that necessitates thorough mastication, and so stimulates a copious flow of saliva. *Hard* food preserves the gums; *dry* food is the only kind that acts upon the parotid glands. These particular salivary glands—the parotid—fail utterly to contribute any fluid to the mouth unless invited to do so with dry food; which accounts for the fact that persons who eat soft pap and consume quantities of fluids are likely to have poor teeth, an impure breath and wretched digestions.

Soap should never be used as a cleansing agent upon the teeth, as it kills the active principle—ptyalin—in saliva. Now the search for tartar solvents occupies the minds of dental hygienists. The formation of this unpleasant concretion occurs more rapidly in some cases than in others. At first it is soft, easily removable with a rubber band or dental floss. If the teeth are carefully gone over every day or two and this soft deposit removed, there is little danger of its accumulating and forming hard, scaly masses around the bases of the teeth. Milk alkalies, used as a wash and allowed to remain on the teeth overnight, are recommended. Salines will prevent the ready formation of tartar and help to remove fresh deposits; of these, the salts of mineral springs, such as Carlsbad, with a powder of calcium carbonate, make a good agent and are advised by a leading dental authority.

A physiologic salt solution—consisting of one teaspoonful of salt to a pint of boiled water—reduces germ growth;

while a tablespoonful—one-half an ounce—of lime water, added to this, forms an ideal mouth wash, particularly in acid mouth conditions, as it corresponds more nearly to an artificial saliva. It cannot be emphasized too often that saliva is nature's protector of the teeth and mouth. The ideal mouth wash, then, consists of one pint of boiled water, to which has been added a teaspoonful of table salt and a tablespoonful of lime water.

The teeth should always be rinsed with this wash after eating, the liquid being drawn back and forth with a suction movement, expelled, and the process renewed until the teeth are entirely free from all extraneous matter and the mouth feels sweet and clean. Many dentists now condemn the toothbrush *in toto*, claiming that erosion of the teeth and gums follows heroic brushing; also that it is impossible, with the usual brush, to reach back teeth and behind and between teeth, so that the object of the brush not only fails, but does harm, in many instances.

Some conscientious dentists have special brushes made for their clientele. One man of long experience originally took a brush with a tufted end and cut off all the bristles but the tuft. This, with the shank tapered down, is the brush that he now has made up for that purpose. Says a dental surgeon:

"Just one little tuft! A blooming little tooth pick! Just so, but it makes the patient take care of each tooth separately. They can't all take out their teeth to clean them."

Of the thirty or more varieties of brushes on sale in the shops, there are long-handled brushes almost answering this description to be had now, but it is an easy matter to make them and, once they have been used, the ordinary kind will never again give satisfaction. As to tooth pastes, powders, and the like, volumes have been written and fortunes made, while common salt is as

good a dentrifice as any and better than most, as it sweetens the mouth, hardens the gums, and prevents decay. The combination given above—Carlsbad salt with calcium carbonate—is the choice of one dental authority. But there will always be those who feel that they require something less simple, and for such the following excellent tooth powder will fully fill every need:

Finely powdered Peruvian bark.....	1 ounce
Carbonate of ammonia.....	2 ounces
Powdered orris root.....	2 ounces
Powdered cinnamon.....	1 ounce
Powdered myrrh.....	1 ounce
Precipitated chalk.....	1 ounce
Oil of cloves.....	5 drops

It is the opinion of experienced oral surgeons that the gums of *all* those who live under modern conditions are in a state of continual inflammation. In some the condition is so mild as to elude ordinary detection, and it ranges in severity between this and a state of deep-seated pyorrhea. The *immediate* causes given are many; the fundamental cause has already been thoroughly gone over above—*demineralized, soft, perverted foods*. Of the immediate causes may be mentioned erosion of the teeth and gums by brushes and powders; the pressure of ill-fitting dental work—bridges and crowns—the putting of infected things into the mouth, especially dirty fingers; eating with unclean hands; drinking and eating after others; hard particles of food forced against the gums; picking the teeth; collections of tartar and bacteria; neglect and uncleanness of the teeth; dental caries.

In the beginning, the symptoms are so faint that no attention is given the condition *either by the dentist or by the patient*. There may be a slight uneasiness felt in the gums and around the teeth—not an actual pain, just a discomfort or a sensitiveness; then it is observed that picking or suction makes them bleed; then a slight sore-

ness, which is often mistaken for something between the teeth, occurs.

The process is exceedingly slow, taking years to develop. Even when the gums have softened and broken away from the roots of the teeth and pus pockets have formed deep down in the alveolar processes, the patient remains unaware of it. He does not taste the bleeding gums while chewing his food, and he does not dream that his lack of buoyant health is caused by the absorption into his system of the pus, bacterial debris, and what not from his mouth. The accumulation of this debris during the night imparts a bad taste to his mouth and a foul odor to his breath in the morning. The ordinary hasty toilet of the mouth before breakfast removes very little of the poison and quantities of it are swallowed with the food.

The question naturally arises: Is the condition curable? Yes. Of course too much stress cannot be laid upon preventive measures. Rubbing the gums daily with table salt and a rubber massage brush, packing the teeth nightly with bicarbonate of soda and prepared chalk are among the simple means at the command of any one. These methods *prevent*; they also *check* the beginnings of the trouble. Now, when it has advanced to an appreciable extent, what is to be done?

All the cleansing in the world with the usual preparations goes for naught, but *tincture of iodine* destroys every germ with which it comes in contact and renders the mouth sterile! So, in mild cases, a solution of tincture of iodine—say half a teaspoonful to a small glass of water—daubed on the gums and around the teeth, then used as a wash and gargle and *used, actually used*, a half dozen times daily, will correct the condition and keep it corrected.

For more difficult cases, in which the gums are red, swollen, and bleeding and cavities appear at the necks of the teeth,

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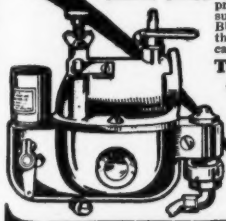
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Concerning the Teeth

a noted and successful man uses the following: zinc iodide, fifteen parts; distilled water, ten parts; iodine crystals, twenty-five parts; glycerin, fifty parts. He advises that this be applied to the teeth and gums, and the sensitive cavities saturated every day with an application, for one, two, or three weeks, until the cavities cease to be sensitive, the mouth is clean, the germs are all destroyed, and the gums have receded to nearly or quite normal. At the same time, the following gum wash should be used:

Zinc sulpho-carbolate	60 grains
Alcohol	1 ounce
Distilled water	2 ounces
True oil of wintergreen	8 drops

The gum wash must be applied with a stiff gum massage brush that will reach the festoons between all the teeth, and of course a dentist should have the patient under observation.

There is no excuse for the decay and degeneration of the teeth of the rising generation. If parents neglect the simple suggestions given herein, they are guilty of gross and wanton negligence. X-ray investigations to clear up doubtful cases, which are now being used by physician and dentist, are by no means confined to adult practice. X-ray measurements of the unerupted permanent teeth at the ages of five and six years, to provide for the regulation of the arch of the mouth, are now being carried out, so that the overlapping of teeth and deformities of the jaws with all that follows—arrested development of the nasal passage, even arrested mental development—can be prevented by this precaution. And still there are some who regard the orthodontist as a "beauty doctor!" The pioneers in matters pertaining to health and beauty are coming into their own.

Answers to Queries

MRS. W.—Yes, the electric needle, in *expert* hands, is the only destructive agent for the removal of superfluous hair that we know of now. Many object to it for various reasons. Next in efficacy is the devitalizing method of Professor Sabourand. By means of an ointment frequently and faithfully applied, the hair is slowly bereft of color and life. It is a slow process, concerning which I will write you in greater detail upon receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The bleaching method consists of equal parts of genuine peroxide of hydrogen and household ammonia, daubed on several times daily. Some complain that it increases the growth.

VERNET.—If you are troubled with chronic freckles and liver spots, you need first a liver and intestinal tonic, the name of which I will gladly send upon proper application. Locally, a bleaching agent will gradually remove the blemishes by peeling the skin. Here is a good one:

Salicylic acid	30 grains
Bay rum	2 ounces

Apply with absorbent cotton twice daily.

Care must be taken not to get it near the eyes, nostrils, or lips. If the skin becomes much reddened or irritated, stop the applications and use a bland toilet cream.

MARJORIE.—I am sorry the various bleaches you have come across from time to time in this department have failed to remove the tan. It is probably so deep-seated that it requires a penetrating cream which removes the outer cuticle. On receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope, I will gladly advise you as to an appropriate preparation.

ADMIRER.—Yes, I remember having advised my readers as to a new method for bust development. Part of the treatment came from Germany, and since the outbreak of the war we have been unable to secure it. However, I am happy in the knowledge that a famous French preparation for external application, heretofore beyond our reach, is now being made in this country. It possesses distinct properties and is well worth trying. The price of the domestic article is not prohibitive. For further data, address me privately.

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Opinion of Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City

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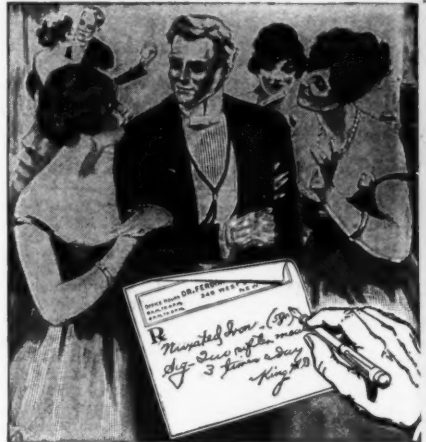
Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York Physician and Medical Author, when interviewed on the subject, said: "There can be no vigorous iron men without iron. Pallor means anemia. Anemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anemic men and women is pale. The flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone; the brain fags and the memory fails, and often they become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks."

"In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated corn-meal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked, are responsible for another grave iron loss."

"Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe old age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt."

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston Physician, who has studied both in this country and in great European Medical Institutions, said: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only take Nuxated Iron when they feel weak or rundown, instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages I am convinced that in this way they could ward off disease, preventing it becoming organic in thousands of cases and thereby the lives of thousands might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, kidney, liver, heart trouble and other dangerous maladies. The real and true cause which started their disease was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood."

"Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man. In fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—Nuxated Iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 he was care worn and nearly all in. Now at 50, after taking Nuxated Iron, a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in



from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the fray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

NOTE.—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians both in Europe and America. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in nuxated iron that they offer to forfeit \$100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron, and increase their strength 100 per cent or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

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